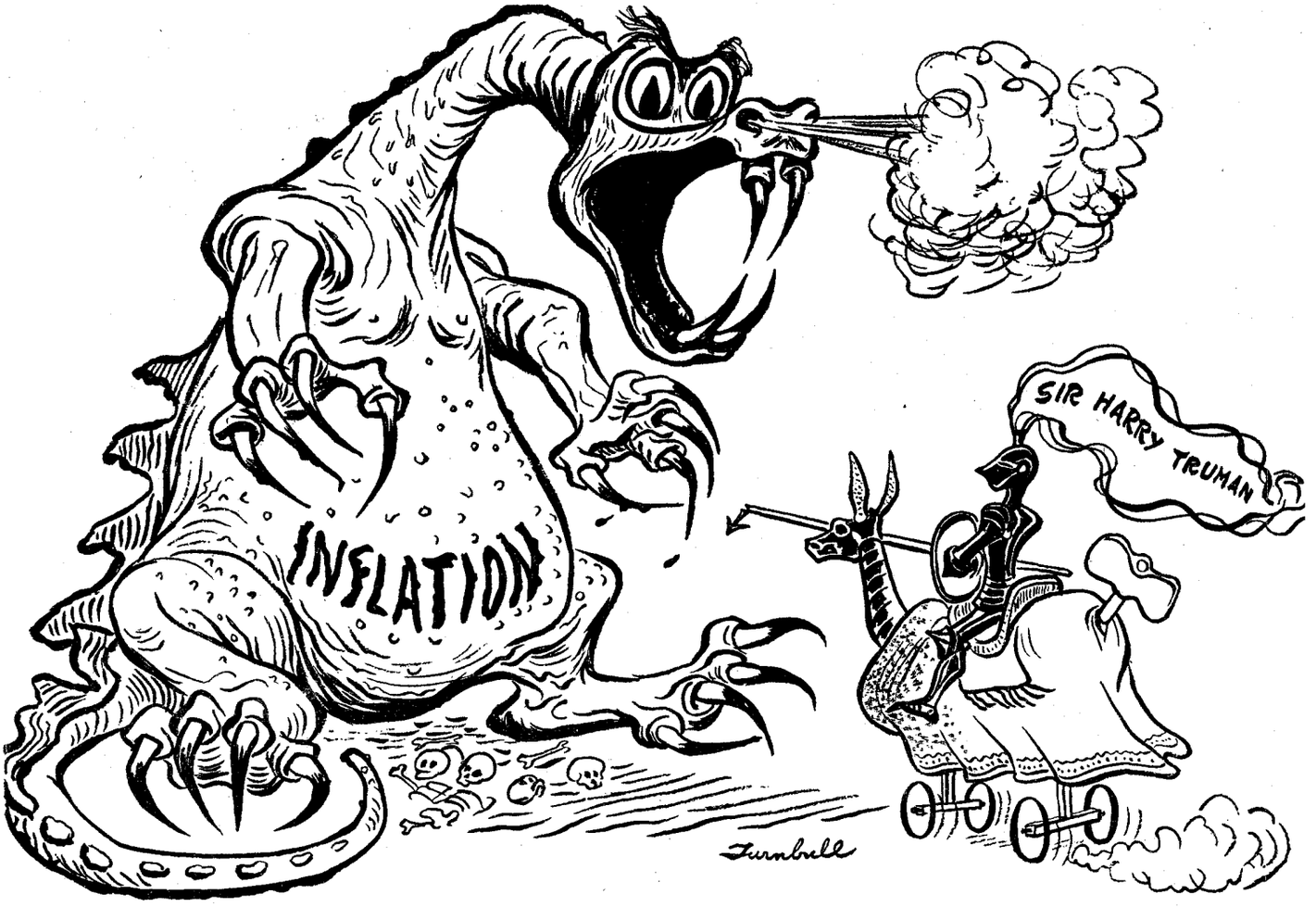
new masses

VOL. LIX, No. 7
MAY 14, 1946
15¢, in Canada 20¢



LIBERAL FALLACY ON THE NEGRO QUESTION

By Herbert Aptheker

THE CHALLENGE OF ATOMIC ENERGY

By Paul Miller

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just a minute

EVER read the six-point type at the bottom of this page? If so, you may have noticed the line that goes, "NEW MASSES welcomes the work of new writers and artists."

Maybe we should run that line in fourteen-point. For new writers and artists are the life-blood of our magazine.

This year marks the thirty-fifth anniversary of the founding of NEW MASSES. And in a real sense our magazine—whether it was called *The Masses*, *The Liberator* or NEW MASSES—has since that first issue been a magazine of new writers and artists, new thinkers, new singers of the song of democracy and socialism. Many of America's best talents were first "discovered" in these pages.

Of course, that word "discovered" cuts two ways. Many of those whose first work appeared in our magazine are still batting on the side of the people: the list is long and honorable. But such is the tremendous weight of the capitalist culture under which we live that some, too, have since got tired of digging at the avalanche, have made their compromises, or have sold their bitter, cynical talents to the very enemy against whom they first rose. They, too, have been "discovered."

The other day we were leafing through some 1919 and 1920 issues of the old *Liberator*. The First World War had ended; our ancestor battled valiantly for the newborn Soviet Union and against imperialism, against capitalist culture's hypocrisy, against strike-breakers. We felt tremendously proud of our predecessor: for in those days it pushed back the avalanche almost alone.

Today another war has ended; the attack on the world's people is on again, no holds barred. The market for renegacy, for anti-Soviet fantasies, is looking up.

But today we are no longer alone. Today the democratic peoples of the world are infinitely stronger, better organized, richer in understanding than they were then. And the great triumph, the great lesson of the Soviet Union makes it impossible for anyone with fresh eyes to become "disillusioned," tired, cynical.

Now more than ever our best writers and artists must come from the youth. We must see the world through the searching eyes of our students, through the anger of our veterans, through the struggle toward understanding of our young workers.

New writers and artists: it is up to you to carry on the great tradition of John Reed, Art Young, Mike Gold, Bill Gropper.

Let's hear from you. NEW MASSES is your magazine.

GENE KELLY, Franklin D. Roosevelt, Jr. and Marion Hargrove are among the veterans who will appear at the "Veterans' Peace Conference" rally at Madison Square Garden on May 16, called by the Veterans' Council of the Independent Citizens' Committee of the Arts, Sciences and Professions. Sen. Claude D. Pepper will be the main speaker; Frank Sinatra and Olivia De Havilland will be there too.

"This meeting is being held to give all the vets a chance to speak on all the problems which confront them," Walter Bernstein, chairman of the ICCASP Veterans' Council, announced. "We won the war; we must have a voice in the peace."

Here's a chance to act. We urge all our veteran readers to be there.

WHO'S WHO in this issue: Speaking of veterans, NM has a small formation of its own leading off this week. Ex-Major Herbert Aptheker's piece is illustrated by ex-Lt. Sidney Simon; ex-S/Sgt. Lawrence Emery's "Return of the Heroes" is decorated by ex-Cpl. Milton Wynne. Other vets are Ephim G. Fogel and Thomas McGrath.... It's not just family pride that makes us happy about the new pamphlet, "Socialism: What's in it for You," by A. B. Magil. It's a brilliant job—the clearest, simplest, most convincing explanation of socialism we can remember reading. You'll hear more about it.

PERSONAL: Will Tom Ray, who submitted two stories to NM, please get in touch with us? We have no return address for him at present.

B. M.

new masses

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Sidney Simon.

A LIBERAL DILEMMA

The Negro question is a material one, not a moral one. A discussion of the Myrdal school's view of the question as an "American Dilemma."

By HERBERT APTHEKER

THE times demand the most uncompromising clarity. We must tolerate no obfuscation, no distortion, no weasel-worded hedging. We who have seen the face of fascism will never forget it—and the fumes from Columbia, Tennessee, stink as vilely as those from Dachau.

A prime example and source of this distortion is the gigantic work undertaken, under the auspices of the Carnegie Corporation, by Gunnar Myrdal, and published in two volumes with the title, *An American Dilemma: The Negro People and American Democracy*. This work has been accepted, far and wide, with rare but notable exceptions, as a definite description and analysis of what it terms the "Negro problem." Indeed, the *Saturday Review of Literature* permitted itself to say that it was "the most penetrating and important book on our contemporary civilization that has been written." It has been condensed and widely spread in pamphlet form by many groups from the Public Affairs Committee to the Columbus, Ohio, Council for Democracy. Everywhere one turns nowadays, from Richard Wright's introduction for *Black Metropolis*, to Rayford Logan's preface to the generally excellent *What The Negro Wants*, he runs into this word "dilemma" with which Myrdal branded the question.

What is a "dilemma"? Webster tells us that a dilemma is "a situation involving choice, especially in actions, *between equally unsatisfactory alternatives*." It is perhaps understandable how an official economist for the government of Sweden, and a Senator of that country which treated the late war against fascism as a dilemma and preferred neutrality (especially a neutrality made lucrative by "necessary" trading with Nazi Germany) might decide

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to christen the fact of the exploitation and oppression of the American Negro people a dilemma—"a situation involving choice . . . between equally unsatisfactory alternatives." But for us this interpretation is not only not definitive, it is incorrect, and absolutely vicious. It is, to use the words with which Myrdal has the colossal gall to characterize Marxism, "superficial and erroneous."

That this choice of a title is not merely fortuitous, nor the result of a misapprehension of a common enough word, is demonstrated when one examines the analysis contained in the work (meant to be, as Myrdal states, "an analysis, not a description"), and in books whose interpretations avowedly evolve from it, most notably Drake and Cayton's *Black Metropolis*.

To Myrdal and Drake and Cayton and Wright the Negro question is "primarily a moral issue," "essentially a moral problem," and the commercial press has quickly and happily headlined this finding. Thus, the *New Republic* agrees that "The American Negro problem is a problem in the heart of every American," and *Time* puts it somewhat more pathetically by confessing that "America is continuously struggling for its soul," while David L. Cohn, borrowing the very words of Nazism, says it "is at bottom a blood or sexual problem." Indeed, Myrdal himself devotes an entire page to attempting to explain the magical, mystical roots present in prejudice, and then gives this up by admitting "the difficulties in expressing it in rational language and explaining it in such a way that it makes sense."

How comforting these nebulous, idealistic phrases are—soul, heart, blood, moral problem! Surely one can do nothing about a condition afflicting the heart and soul and blood of all Americans! Surely the social scientists will see how hopeless this all is! Indeed, haven't they themselves decided it to be a dilemma?

Yes, Mr. Wright obliges. He ridicules the efforts of "both the political Left and the political Right" (such impartiality!), for they, by trying "to change the Negro problem into something that they can control" are "denying the humanity of the Negro"! And Mr. Cayton and Mr. Drake oblige too—though with more restraint—for they aver that perhaps then "the Negro question—given the moral flabbiness of America—is incapable of solution." And they state this with ostensible boldness for they feel it is fashionable and "required to appear cheerful and optimistic."

We need not worry about what is required in fashionable circles. And it is not a question of appearing cheerful; it is not a question of optimism or pessimism. It is a question of activism or pacifism. It is a question of ideology. It is a question of idealism versus materialism. Is the trouble in people's souls, or in the conditions under which people live? Is it a moral question, or a socio-economic one? Does it have its roots in material conditions? Does morality itself have an existence independent of the actual existing order? Do the institutions of man shape him, and does man in turn shape those institutions, or, having proclaimed the humanity of man, have we simultaneously announced him to be uncontrollable by ourselves?

We affirm two things: (1) the Negro question is a material one, not a moral one. The oppression and superexploitation of the American Negro—the class-caste system and semi-colonial status in which he is held—exist and are maintained because they were and are profitable and useful to America's propertied interests; and (2) there is no American dilemma for believers in democracy and full rights for all people. We do have a situation involving choice—the preservation of our existing dog-eat-dog system, or the introduction of a pattern of life worthy of and necessary for twentieth century

Charles Keller.

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humanity—namely, socialism, which in one-sixth of the world and among 200,000,000 people of almost 200 different nationalities, creeds and colors, has extirpated such vestiges of tyranny as racism. This latter fact, it is significant to notice, is not to be found among the 750,000 words of Myrdal's study of the very question there successfully resolved.

With colossal perversion of fact, Dr. Myrdal deprecates the materialist conception of society by asserting that it leads to hopelessness. What nonsense! The denial of materialism leads to hopelessness and impotence. We have already quoted Mr. Wright to that effect—humanity is not subject to control—he says. And we have cited the lamentations of Cayton and Drake as to the alleged moral flabbiness of America, and their fear that the question is insoluble. Myrdal himself states that the possibility of a complete and true solution to the question is "far beyond the horizon." Here we have, in somewhat elevated language, the same basic ideas as those of Allen Tate, Donald Davidson, David Cohn—and Bilbo and Rankin.

This perversion of the truth, this charge that we materialists see no hope, flows from the idea that since we declare that in a society where each man is the other's competitor and enemy—where, in the words of the artist, William Steig, there is a "lack of grace, order and honesty"—that in such an exploiting society the institution or organization itself germinates such diseases as racism, that since we see this, it leads us to deny the utility of any but the most radical and thorough-going action.

This is false—just as false as it would be to declare that because we know malaria comes from a germ injected into the bloodstream by a particular mosquito, we therefore do not treat the fever and discomfort of its victims with quinine or atabrine. Of course we treat the symptoms, of course we aid and guard and protect the victims—but we also attack the miasmas from which the disease springs. We wipe out the swamps, we kill the disease-carrying parasites—*only this eliminates the disease.*

So PRECISELY in this disease of racism. Certainly we fight against lynching, against the poll-tax, against discrimination wherever and whenever it appears. We do this not only because these things are evil, but because struggling against them educates and unites the people. Of course, we fight against the May Quinns and Charles Coughlins and Gerald Smiths and Theodore Bilbos. Of course we battle to eliminate distortions from the textbooks, the press, the movies. Of course we seek out the historical truth and spread it as widely as we can. We do not ignore the battle of the pen and of the word. But we do not merely point to the symptoms. We do not merely feed quinine to the chilled sufferer. We tell him where the swamp is, we point out the parasitic agent which feeds upon him and attempts to infect his bloodstream.

We do not merely say with Robert J. Havighurst of the Committee on Human Development of the University of Chicago that "where a problem is basically a moral problem, it must be recognized and treated as such. . . . We must teach boys and girls that selfishness and group pride are sins. We must teach adults that selfishness and hatred and group pride take the forms of social discrimination and group prejudice."

But the children know all is not sweetness and light. They know that after the delightful assembly period come the struggles of the street and the worries of the parents. They know that after the graduation ceremonies with their unctuous phrases come the struggle to live, the fight for a job, for leisure, for health, for real education, for a creative existence. And the adults know that while on Sunday selfishness is a sin, on the six other days of the week it is a cardinal necessity for getting along in our society. Such moral suasion with undefined terms, and left as mere words, breeds cynicism, but does not destroy racism. And do we forget, in this preoccupation with an educational revolution to spring full-blown from some mystical inspiration, the apt words of Marx and Engels that "the class which has the material means of production at its disposal, has at the same time control over the means of mental production"?

Do we forget all history—do we forget our own history? All now (except fascists) are agreed that human slavery is wrong and evil. But this unanimity did not exist a century ago. No, then there was the sharpest disagreement as to the merits or demerits of the system and all sorts of gradations of opinion. Indeed, then the dominant political party asserted that attacks upon human slavery were antidemocratic, were attacks upon their freedom—as they were—to hold slaves, and attacks upon their property—as they were—a direct assault upon several billions of dollars of private property.

There were moral suasionists then, too, people who said, as Wallace Stegner says today, that the only hope was in convincing the white people of the South that the dominant mode of social organization was evil. But, if that is *all* there had been, we would still be arguing the question and most of our newspapers—judging from their past and present-day policies—would be upholding the institution.

Said a slaveholder, in 1832: "This one thing we wish to be understood and remembered—that the Constitution of this state has made Tom, Dick and Harry, *property*—and it has made Polly, Nancy and Molly, ***property;*** and be that property an evil, a curse, or whatnot, we intend to hold it. Property, which is considered the most valuable by the owners of it, is a nice thing; and for the right thereto, to be called in question by an unphilosophical set of political mountebanks, under the influence of supernatural agency or deceit, is insufferable." And, said another slaveholder, a United States Senator, in 1845, speaking to the moral suasionists and commenting on the bitterness with which they denounced the sin of slaveholding: "But if your course was wholly different—if you distilled nectar from your lips and discoursed sweetest music, could you reasonably indulge the hope of accomplishing your object by such means? Nay, supposing that we were all convinced, and thought of slavery precisely as you do, at what era of moral suasion do you imagine you could prevail on us to give up a thousand millions of dollars in the value of our slaves, and a thousand millions of dollars more in the depreciation of our lands, in consequence of a want of laborers to cultivate them?"

War terminated the question. When the slaveocracy saw its federal control threatened and then taken from it by a newly ascendant class, the industrial capitalist allied with the free agricultural west, and when it saw its own internal power under fire from what it contemptuously referred to as its "mudsill"—Negro and white—and saw more and more enlisting, therefore, under the banners of people like Frederick Douglass and Harriet Tub-

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man, it did what all dying ruling classes generally have done—it attempted a counter-revolution. It resorted to violence, and in four years, with the loss of 500,000 precious young lives—Negro and white—it was crushed. Have we forgotten all this?

THE school which insists on considering the position of the American Negro as a moral problem tends to decry the morality of the masses. Given their hypothesis, this is natural. If they think of the question as one of sin, as something in the blood and soul and heart of our people—Negro and white—they must address themselves to slanders of those people. They assert that oppression morally degrades the oppressed; they see the policy of the exploiter in treating his victims as inferiors as being successful in that by such treatment they do become "inferior."

This has always been the aim and assertion of the ruling class. To the French nobleman, to the Russian boyar, to the British nabob, the peasants or natives—the masses—have been creatures to be scorned and despised. To the aristocratic Hamilton, "The people is a great Beast." And we frequently find so-called liberal—let alone reactionary—intellectuals who agree with them. This deprecation is present, for example, in John Dewey who, in 1927, wrote that "the situation then produces conditions which justify the belief in respective superiority and inferiority. For of course any people held in subjection and at a great disadvantage economically and politically is bound to show the consequences." This is present throughout Myrdal, with the added vicious twist that discrimination exists, very largely, *because of this inferiority*.

Yes, there will be consequences. The people who are oppressed will have higher morbidity and mortality rates, their formal schooling will be retarded, the percentage of their people behind the bars of the rulers' prisons will be relatively high—of course—all this is true.

But their basic integrity will be untouched. Their aspirations for decency, justice, humanity—decency, justice, humanity for them and of them—will be present. Richard Wright may believe, as he writes, that "one could say of Negro life" as Vachel Lindsay said in his "Leaden-Eyed":

It is not that they starve, but they starve so dreamlessly. . . .
It is not that they die, but they die like sheep.

But he is wrong. All history shows he is wrong—all life shows he is wrong. All history, all life is composed of the dreams and struggles of the very people who, Wright says, "starve so dreamlessly and die like sheep." Hear the songs, read the poetry, listen to the folktales of the Negro and say he is without dreams! Study Cato of Stono, Gabriel of Richmond, Touissant of Haiti, Vesey of Charleston, Turner of Southampton, and Frederick Douglass and say they die like sheep!

What nonsense is this! What slander!

The oppressed are the heroic. The dispossessed are the uncorrupt. How the earth has trembled in the past at the just wrath of the tortured masses—name what nation you wish—America, England, France, Russia, Italy, Spain, China, India—always and everywhere the vanguard and the instruments of change, challenge and advance have been the poor, the dissatisfied, the discontented. As Engels stated, "certainly that morality which contains the maximum of enduring elements is the one which, in the present . . . represents the future: that is the proletarian."

The oppressors, the exploiters are the morally inferior, the decadent, those whose brains have been warped by devotion to the past and to the rotting, and whose hands have been transformed into knotted fists of hate and fear because they have been clutching the knout in one and the moneybag in the other for lo, these many years! It is such an environment that produces an Herr Doktor Goebbels, a William Randolph Hearst.

Listen to Eugene Grace, president of Bethlehem Steel: "Patriotism is a beautiful sentiment, but it must not be allowed to interfere with our duties for our stockholders."

And Pierre du Pont: "We cannot assent to allowing our own patriotism to interfere with our duties as trustees for our stockholders."

And Alfred Sloan, of General Motors, commenting upon his corporation's dealings with Nazi Germany: "An international business . . . should conduct its business in strictly business terms . . . without regard to political beliefs."

And Charles E. Bedaux, multimillionaire, efficiency expert par excellence, speaking to other businessmen: "A man loves his country. He makes laws for the glory of his flag. He traces the outline of a national ideal he would like to live up to, but his stomach, his needs for trade are essentially international.

"He is a patriot, and a sincere one, but when his money is concerned, he blissfully commits treason." This is the man who killed himself during the late war when FBI agents finally set out to arrest him for pro-Nazi activities.

Let us recall the beautiful passage in Lincoln Steffens' autobiography where he tells us that while he and his friends were observing the Soviets in action, early in the Bolshevik revolution, they "were invited to a tea or a luncheon by Hugh Walpole, the English writer. He and other English gentlemen had come to Petrograd to help restrain the revolution and keep the Russians at war. . . . No doubt he assumed that we were gentlemen, like him, and would function naturally against the revolution, the people, and peace. . . . Looking at him and looking at that stinking, earnest, high-aspiring Russian mob, it seemed to me that the mob was the gentleman, not the British novelist-essayist. Surely the hope of the race steamed up out of the Soviet, not from Hugh Walpole and his crew of instinctive imperialists. They went to Kerensky; I went back to the . . . Soviet. . . . Watching that mass meeting of delegates," Steffens concludes, "was like seeing the historical development of human government out of chaos. One could see that there was good will in man, plenty of it, and that, left to itself, its ideals and purposes were noble. Contempt for man, pessimism, melted away."

For a song of the people, the "Leaden-Eyed" will not do. Rather we sing with the German anti-fascist, Berthold Brecht:

You, on whom the blows are falling
Hear your wounded brothers calling
Weakness gives us strength to lend you
Comrade, come, we shall avenge you
Everything or nothing. All of us or none.

(*This article represents a very brief summary and condensation of a forthcoming longer work.*)

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WALL STREET'S AMBASSADOR-AT-LARGE

An Editorial by A. B. MAGIL

IT ISN'T easy to get a passport these days. There is as yet no tourist travel to Europe, and passports are presumably being issued only to persons traveling on business. I don't know what urgent business entitled Earl Browder to a passport that has taken him to Europe; evidently the State Department does. In fact, no less a person than the Acting Secretary of State, Dean Acheson, felt the Browder trip important enough to comment on it at a press conference and to reveal information about this particular passport which ordinarily, according to the New York *Times*, "is held in confidence by the State Department."

The State Department's interest in facilitating a European trip for Browder is not surprising. For the past few months this expelled renegade from the Communist movement has been acting in the pages of his weekly publication, *Distributors Guide*, as an unofficial ambassador-at-large for American imperialism. No paid member of the diplomatic corps has trumpeted the glories of aggressive American reaction more slavishly than he. Whether the State Department has now given Browder some official cachet, or whether it has merely undertaken to provide a wider arena for his unofficial services is a detail. The fact is that certain political objectives have already been accomplished. At a moment when the commercial press has been rife with all sorts of attacks on the Soviet Union, the Browder trip, with its announced intention of including the USSR, has opened the sluice-gates for new anti-Soviet insinuations as well as for provocative slanders directed at the American Communist Party.

It was the respectable *Times* which gave the cue with a story which, not content with reporting the fact that Browder had taken off by plane, went on to fabricate statements by anonymous "Communist leaders" designed to make it appear that the Communist Party of the United States was linked in some mysterious fashion with Moscow.

But it remained for the liberal *PM* to put on the performance calculated to produce a smash hit. Who should be entrusted with so delicately swinish a task? Who else but *PM's* own ersatz Browder, a venomous little renegade named James Wechsler? In place of the *Times'* anonymous "Communist leaders" Wechsler has his own no less anonymous "high government officials." These bashful but articulate soothsayers see a direct connection between Browder's trip and Soviet foreign policy. And they also see the American Communist "line" as a product of manipulations by Soviet leaders.

"Unless the Soviet leaders," writes Wechsler, "are pondering a program that requires another shift in the US Communist line, it is felt, Browder would not be the recipient of open-door treatment." On the other hand, "if he [Browder] gets nowhere and Foster is sustained, it means that pessimism dominates the thinking of the Soviet leadership and that Communist agitation against 'capitalist-imperialism' is to remain the official party gospel in the USA and other countries."

Thus the Soviet Union and the American Communists are damned if they do and damned if they don't. Whatever the course of Soviet policy, Wechsler convicts our greatest wartime ally of interfering in the internal affairs of the United States. And whatever the course of the American Communists, he convicts them of being foreign agents.

These vicious libels have a familiar odor: though Wechsler seeks to shift the onus from himself to anonymous government officials, *what he spreads over nearly a full page of "PM" is the unadulterated Rankin line.* His article, beneath contempt by journalistic standards, would be a perversion of the truth anywhere; it is all the more shocking in a newspaper which professes to be liberal.

I HAVE no special "inside dope" about Browder's trip or about the reasons for his admission or non-admission to the USSR. But his recent career is a matter of public record. Browder was removed from leadership and subsequently expelled by the action of an American organization, the Communist Party of the USA. This was done because he persisted in upholding theories and policies which abandoned Marxist science and sought to deliver the Communist and labor movements into the hands of monopoly capital. In the words of a statement issued by the Communist Party secretariat concerning the press speculations on the Browder trip:

". . . Browder's policies were rejected and repudiated by the membership and leadership of the Communist Party because they were and are policies profoundly anti-Marxist and, therefore, contrary to the interests of the American working class and nation. Browder was expelled from its ranks by the Communist Party as an unreconstructed revisionist, as a social imperialist, as an enemy of the working class. He remains a renegade and his policies remain those of an apologist for American imperialism."

This statement also points out what is well known even to those who have a vested interest in malicious untruth: that "the Communist Party is a completely independent political party of the American working class. It is responsible only to the will and decisions of its own membership, which alone has authority and power to fix its policies, decide its actions and elect its officers."

Browder's trip, by attempting to obscure and falsify these elementary facts, only underlines his role as an acolyte of big business, serving its reactionary ends.

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THE CHALLENGE OF ATOMIC ENERGY

What are the prospects for domestic exploitation of atomic power for peaceful purposes? The lines of struggle are urgently clear.

By PAUL MILLER

This is the third article of a series. The first two appeared in the issues of April 23 and April 30.

THE fact of atomic fission on a large and controlled scale produces two extremely contradictory alternatives—prodigious devastation of people and cities (at approximately one-fiftieth the cost of older methods) or unprecedented quantities of power for construction on a scale which beggars description. Which road will our planet travel? What are the contending forces in this most fateful arena? What can the little man do to influence the direction of developments? These are large questions. They call for careful and thorough analysis, valuable only if the conclusions do not remain entombed in print. With one further caution, let us enter the grim or the promising—whichever it turns out to be—business; there is no crystal ball which can help, there are no simple formulas which automatically grind out the solution. Nor is the state of affairs—whether favorable or not—necessarily a static one. It will change and respond to pressure from either side. But the stakes are high; let the pressure be in proportion.

I begin by underlining a few facts. Only the United States has atomic bombs—*as far as we know*. Only the United States is making atomic bombs and is doing it around the clock. Great Britain has announced that it intends to make atomic bombs. France has said that it plans to produce and test atomic bombs in the Sahara. The Soviet Union has said, through Foreign Minister Molotov, "We will have atomic energy, too, and many other things."

It is clear then that all the large countries, at least, are committed to developing atomic energy, including the atomic bomb. American scientists have variously estimated that it will take another country, with adequate resources and personnel, from three to ten years to reach our present level of development in this field. Most of them grant the possibility that our achievements can be surpassed, too. We know—even if we were not told—that foreign scientists are studying the problem furiously. Yet our policy is to keep our technical secrets to ourselves and to continue making atomic bombs. In short, there is an atomic armament race on, which is of Washington's making.

Yet the administration says it believes in the United Nations, that it does not want war, that no country need fear the United States as an aggressor; but our official voices are blurred by the "noise" from our atomic bomb plants. What are we to believe? What are our war allies to think? And whatever they think, are they not bound to make atomic bombs so long as the US does?

Is it not obvious that just so long as the administration's actions contradict its avowed policies, only its actions will be taken seriously? The rest is hypocrisy and doubletalk, mostly for confusing the home folks.

What other signs are there? We have the War Department sponsored May-Johnson bill which would give all the power over atomic energy to a military commission. That hardly speaks well for our peaceful intentions. What is more, the security regulations surrounding this commission are so stringent that the secrecy which guarded the wartime activity of the project would be continued and become the "normal" peacetime practice. No one, not even Congress, could question or control the policy of the commission. Incidentally, the situation prevailing today, in the absence of specific legislation, is hardly any different. Who, outside a very select circle close to the military, and the President, knows how many atom bombs we have, how many we are making, what our plans are? The May-Johnson bill would freeze the worst aspects of the present situation into law and make it even more difficult to change.

We have, too, the persistent rumor out of Washington that the McMahon bill as reported out of committee differs in important ways from the earlier published version of the bill. Does it perhaps have a Vandenberg joker (grim, indeed) which takes advantage of McMahon's decent reputation to equate this bill with the May-Johnson measure? Is Congress tossing a coin with two heads on it while crying, "Heads we (imperialist coalition) win, tails you (the people) lose"?

At this time, it is impossible to make a definitive statement about the McMahon bill. It is necessary to wait and see what the actual bill is (by the time this appears in print, copies will probably be available) and take appropriate action. It is true that in its original form it did gain the support of the vast majority of the atomic scientists and of progressive people generally. But it is impossible to overestimate the danger of military control, even if it is sugar-coated. We must remember that the essential difference between military and civilian is not the style of dress. It's an attitude, a policy, a philosophy.

In this connection, the President's appointment of a civilian, Bernard Baruch, is a case in point. He and his bright Wall Street assistants can't cope with the problem in the people's interests. We need forthright progressive men whose allegiance to the people is untainted by other influences.

THE forthcoming Bikini Atoll "tests" are another example of the administration's apparent schizophrenia. Our big Navy folks just have to know what an atomic bomb will do to a battleship. Why? You can't build adequate battleships any more unless you know the effect of an atomic bomb on one. Or, it's part of our scientific interest in atomic energy—we just want to know *all* about it. If you're crazy, you pay your money and you take your choice. But whom are we fooling? What do we need battleships for?

Then there is the State Department

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sponsored report calling for the formation of an Atomic Development Authority which would be an international organization with control over all resources and developments in atomic energy. On the face of it, the suggestion has an international, cooperative appearance. But in effect it says, let us form an Authority with all the United Nations participating which will control the mining and the manufacture of fissionable materials—*after we have been producing atomic bombs for about a year*. Let's start keeping score now. What went before doesn't count. The State Department report, which is part of the ADA proposal, is silent on many crucial matters—our stock of atomic bombs, our continued secrecy concerning the technical know-how of reducing theory to successful practice, our censorship of scientists who want to publish and discuss their findings in nuclear physics in the interests of advancing our knowledge.

In the light of these shortcomings, the report as it stands is not calculated to foster international cooperation so much as international domination by the United States. Therefore, the report is not going to make for good relations with any independent foreign power. That is not the sound, substantial basis on which to build the peace the people want.

The censorship extends so far that according to the press of some weeks ago, a group of physicists who had no part in the atomic project cannot find a publisher for a book they have written on nuclear physics. The book is based exclusively on previously *published* materials—available and known the world over—yet the McGraw Hill Company will not publish without War Department clearance. This the writers refuse to seek, arguing that it is unwarranted censorship and contrary to sound democratic practice. Even information pertinent to medical applications which grew out of corrolary studies on the project cannot be published, in the interests of military security. One is bound to ask whose security and against whom?

One of the results of this policy is that some three-fourths of the men on the project have left it, having gone back to the universities and industrial laboratories whence they came. They will not work under these conditions, not merely as a matter of absolute principle, because they did it during the

Sammie A. Abbott.

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war, but also because they do not trust the military mind to serve the people's interest best, and specifically because they know that scientific progress cannot flourish under these circumstances. The very leadership we have gained during the war years—assisted considerably by the character and magnitude of the fighting on the Eastern Front — is now dwindling away because of the policy of those forces in our country who are most eager to maintain that leadership so long as it is the monopoly of the War Department and American imperialism.

If we strike a tentative sum, at this point, how do things add up? It would appear that they are extremely unfavorable for the people: present policy and action, proposed legislation and international agreement are all harnessed to serve the interest primarily of the imperialists who would have our country dominate (they call it lead) the world.

WHAT are the prospects for domestic exploitation of atomic power for peaceful purposes? Because all the emphasis, during the war, was on the military application, there remain some problems to solve before industrial use is possible. Following conventional lines first, atomic fission, since it produces heat, could probably be developed to replace or supplement coal and oil—or alternatively water power—which are now used as the sources of industrial heat and motive power. It has not yet been demonstrated that atomic power plants can be operated to produce moderate temperatures—about what is required for home or industrial heating, although this looks very promising.

But to convert atomic power into electrical power via the standard dynamo requires the production of steam at moderately high temperature and pressure. So far as any public announcement is concerned, this has not yet been accomplished. Dr. J. R. Oppenheimer, one of the country's leading nuclear physicists, has said that in an atomic bomb explosion the temperatures developed exceed that of the interior of the sun—millions of degrees Fahrenheit. But for industrial use—along established lines—we need about the temperatures of a large furnace, only a few thousand degrees. Controlling atomic fission to accomplish this will require considerable more research and development work.

One other — unconventional — thought is worth pursuing briefly. The fission of uranium or plutonium is only one way to derive energy from the nucleus of the atom. There is another method already known. It is the way we believe the sun and stars produce their enormous energies. Since the difference between atoms of different elements is basically one of electric charge and mass of the nucleus, and since all nuclei consist of protons and neutrons, theoretically we can convert one element into another by adding (or subtracting) the proper number of protons and neutrons to the nucleus of the particular atom. But the result of such a process—the actual weights of the resulting atoms—is not what one would expect.

An example will make this clear. One of the isotopes of hydrogen, deuterium, weighs 2.015 units per atom. Each deuterium nucleus consists of one proton and one neutron. Ordinary helium weighs 4.004 units per atom. The helium nucleus consists of two protons and two neutrons—just twice the number in the deuterium nucleus. If you take two deuterium atoms and consider the mass of their combined nuclei, it would be two times 2.015 or 4.03 units. But a helium nucleus (with the same number of constituents as two deuterium nuclei) weighs 4.004 units. There is a difference of .026 units of mass.

In other words, if deuterium atoms could be combined to produce helium atoms, .026 units of mass would be transformed into energy per helium atom produced. In addition to being an efficient process, it would have the advantage of utilizing relatively abundant materials. This process, in somewhat more involved fashion, operates in the interior of stars to produce the vast amount of energy which sustains their luminosity for so long.

APPARENTLY, the building up of heavier elements out of lighter ones is very profitable in terms of energy output. But it can—so far—only be accomplished in the interior of stars where it is very hot. However, since we can develop comparable temperatures by nuclear fission, we will perhaps eventually succeed in duplicating the sun's technique for producing energy.

In any event, fission of uranium only marks the beginning—by no means the end—of the exploitation of the atomic nucleus. At what rate will these newer developments materialize and at what rate—when—will they be made socially available? To answer these questions, we must bring other considerations to bear. Let us begin by hailing the recent announcement that a $2,500,000 appropriation has been made to study non-military applications of atomic energy on the Manhattan project. While this is not a puny sum, it should be contrasted with the $500,000,000 we are still spending annually for manufacture of atomic bombs.

In addition to the technical impediments there are other factors which operate in our society to stifle, or at least delay, the development of the domestic uses of atomic energy. The main obstacle is the contradiction between private ownership of the productive process and social utilization of its products. Admittedly the motivating force in our society is profit. To begin with, by general public consent, it has become almost an axiom that atomic energy must be government-owned and controlled. Perhaps we should be ready to support this axiom politically, however.

The destructive potential of atomic energy and the huge installations and cost of further development required for it put it beyond the realm of private ownership—even of big monopoly capital. But big capital will not sit complacently by and watch the government enter the power production field without a fight. Even on a much smaller scale, they fought the development of TVA and are fighting the other hydro-electric projects—though they are clearly in the people's interest. Thus we see that electric power, which did so much to nurture capitalism, cannot be *fully* utilized under capitalism when it comes into conflict with its narrow profit interests. The same is true at least to the same extent in regard to atomic power. Parenthetically, it should be pointed out that government ownership in our society is not socialism. But if carried through by democratic measures, it is a step toward more social control.

Fundamentally, however, it is only in a society where there is no contradiction between those who own the means of production and those for whom the products are made —it is only in a socialist society that the full potential of atomic energy can be achieved. And we may look with confidence to just such developments in the Soviet Union. In the meantime, however, the lines along which we must struggle here are as clear as they are challenging.

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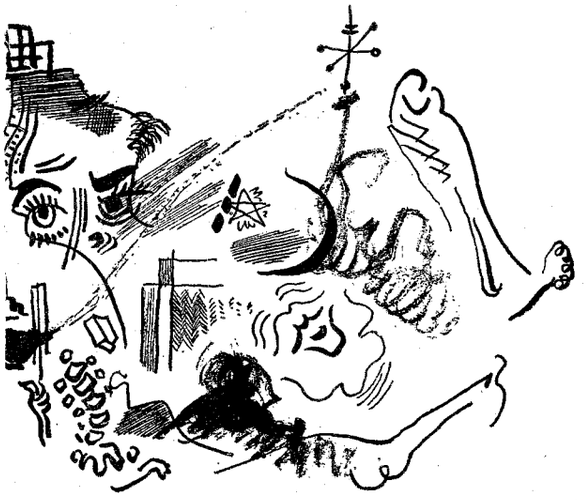
Don't blame me, when you look at the drawings on this page. I want to assure you that I have not gone Ivory-tower, Escapist, Abstract, Surrealist, Non-objective, or Ga-ga in art.

We know that environment and the social and political conditions around us should have a great influence and effect upon us as artists. Being a sensitive artist, I got up, stretched my arms out as far as I can reach, and began to feel for my environment; but wait, before we go any further, I don't use models. All I got around here is an empty studio with a few hard brushes. We can't get stretchers for canvas, lumber shortage, they tell us. My boys will be home from school soon, that's my environment. The older boy has been trying to get into college, he would like to study in any college, but there's no opening, he'll probably be drafted into the Army. They say the vets have college priority, and the vets can't get into college either, most of them are looking for homes and jobs. What an environment! Imagine, a victorious army comes back and they can't find a home to live in. No jobs, no meat or butter, no clothes, no money . . . only black markets. Now Congress is out to kill the OPA, and if they get away with it, prices will skyrocket, we'll soon have inflation, Wall Street will boom, the rich will get richer, the poor will get poorer. With such monkey-business, the future can't look too bright. What an environment, what a condition, what an inspiration! It's a good thing that I'm not thinking about the international situation, after all, you know it's a small world . . . and very contagious.



So if these drawings don't make any sense, neither does the political, social, and economic condition. What an environment! Boy, is there need for a change!

GROPPER

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RETURN OF THE HEROES

They had babbled all the way across the Pacific, but now the troops are quiet as the ship nears shore . . . and now their war years are done.

By LAWRENCE EMERY

Milton Wynne.

No SUN brightens the cold, damp day.

The sky hangs low, gray and dripping, and in the dim light of dawn the mast-tops are lost. On the port quarter the straggly lights of the Faralones blink dismally. The transport slithers through the dull water at half- or quarter-speed and there is no wake. She makes no sound and the troops crowding her decks are so quiet that when they toss their cigarette stubs over the side the quick, slight sizzle can be heard.

In the weak wet light the soldiers look no longer soldierly. They are stooped and huddled because it is cold and they have come from the hot tropics and they have no clothes yet to keep them warm. They are tired. They have been waiting a long, long time.

None of them stir when the squawk-box with its metallic urgency blares over the decks and through the holds. Now hear this . . . now hear this . . . all men who haven't cleared their gear out of the holds will bring it topside immediately . . . that is all.

The sound rips through the ship and the quiet returns.

"You can always tell the voice of authority," says the Little Soldier. "That was the voice of authority. How

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the hell do they get to talk that way? Can you talk with authority?"

"Why hell yes," the Big Soldier answers. "That's the easiest damn thing in the world. Anybody can yap, yap into a loudspeaker system with authority. Getting paid for it is what counts."

"We ought to get paid for having our ears beat off."

The troops had been routed out that morning at four o'clock, although every man aboard knew the ship would not reach a dock before noon. It was the old hurry and wait, hurry and wait of the Army. In the sweaty, thick-packed holds the lights popped on and the blaring squawkbox echoed through all the steel-sided chambers, now hear this, now hear this . . . now do this, now do this.

In the yellow light of the pale lamp-bulbs they crawled off their taut-canvas bunks and squirmed into old and faded suntans.

They packed their bags, or rather unpacked them, tossing aside things they had already carried too far and which they would never need again nor ever want to see again. When they finished, the middle of the hold, the narrow lanes between the bunks, the bunks themselves were heaped high with discarded items: worn suntans, dirty fatigues, shelter-halves, stiff canvas leggings, combat boots, pistol belts, messkits, canteens, helmet-liners, field bags, sweat-soaked blankets. All junk now, all excess baggage.

On deck the damp cold seeped quickly through their light clothes as they pushed through tight clumps of huddled men to find a place to stand and to wait.

THE pilot-boat comes alongside now, a cleanlined little sloop but ghost-like in the unclear early light. Sounds are very distinct; the men on the transport can hear voices on the sloop, the scrape of wood on wood as the pilot's smallboat is lowered into the water, the fluid rhythm of the oars, the rattle of the jacob's-ladder as the pilot clambers up the transport's side.

The ship's telegraph jangles noisily and the whir of her Diesels overcomes the smaller sounds and she gathers speed toward the coast, toward the Gate, the bridge, the city, the land beyond, the vast, tumultuous, yearned-for thing that every man aboard calls Home.

It is as light now as it is going to get. California bulks up out of the sea. It is not foggy but the overcast is so low that the distant outlines are dimmed and faded and there is no color. It is like looking at a flat reproduction slightly out of focus, blurred at the edges, not clean and bright at all.

The troops are very quiet. They have babbled all the way across the Pacific, but now they are quiet. They are checking their memories against the cold fact of their return. The hills ahead are not green; they have been baked dry and brown under summer heat and now, wet with fall rains, they seem bleak and barren. Silently the men stare ahead. In all their memories the sun had been shining and the grass had been fresh.

The bridge, that great arching span which had become the symbol of their return—their slogan had been: The Golden Gate in '48—is directly ahead now but it is vague in the gray overcast. It is still very early morning and only one or two automobiles creep over it.

"Didn't we read that they had a loudspeaker on the bridge that could be heard two miles at sea?" asked the Little Soldier.

"Maybe they haven't got it up yet," said the Big Soldier.

"May they never get it up," the Little Soldier says. "The last thing I need is a speech. Can't you hear that voice, sticky and cheery like a radio-announcer's? The only welcome I want is a speedy discharge."

"You're bitter," says the Big Soldier.

"I just want out."

The bridge is directly overhead now. Looking up, it seems that the ship is still and that the bridge itself is moving. It is dizzying. No one looks up for long.

There are no cheers as the bridge slips past, high above the mast-tops. The troops are silent. Those who speak talk softly. "For three years I thought I'd never get here," one says. "I can top you," the soldier beside him replies. "I spent forty months thinking that."

The squawkbox abruptly dispels the quiet. It blares the names of winners in two pools—one for officers and one for enlisted men—based on the exact time of passing the span.

The troops are now, figuratively, home. The rich moment of arrival has been duly clocked and solemnly entered in the log-book; as of this moment their war years are done.

And there are no cheers. The stillness crowds back as the echo of the squawkbox fades. The troops stare soberly at the land on either side. In the sickbay the men with malaria show no change in temperature.

All the old landmarks of the San Francisco waterfront march past. An old-timer who knows the city stands at the rail and enumerates them, their names meaningless to the men near him—Sutro Baths, the Palace of Fine Arts, the Marina, Telegraph Hill.

"I used to live here," he explains.

"That's Powell Street," he continues, pointing. "At the bottom of the other side of the hill where Powell runs into Market Street the wind always blows; in the old days we used to stand on the corner and watch it whip the girls' dresses. Won't ever do that again, I guess."

"You sound tired," says the Little Soldier.

THE old-timer looked at him. "Bub," he said, "I am tired. This was my second war. How many have you fought?"

"One will do me," said the Little Soldier. "But aren't you glad to get back?"

"I guess I am," said the old-timer. "But I'm changed. I guess everybody else will be changed. Nothing is the same any more. Nothing can ever be the same again."

"You'll feel better after you get that first cold beer," said the Big Soldier.

"And that first plate of fresh scrambled eggs," said the Little Soldier.

The Big Soldier licked his lips and said, "Cold beer."

The Little Soldier looked at him and smiled. "Fresh, scrambled eggs," he said.

The ship's telegraph jangles; her engines cut out and she glides silently through the greenish water. A small craft, apparently an old river excursion boat, hurries toward her, its sharp bow cutting a clean path. The boat finally detaches itself from the gray background and as it draws near, the troops see that on its foredeck is a WAC band. The girls sit in their heavy olive-drab overcoats and keep their hands in their pockets until they are within trumpet-distance of the transport.

Then, reluctantly, they pick up their cold instruments and the blare of a march crashes over the water. The little river boat is now steering a wide circle around the transport.

"I'll be damned," says the Little

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Soldier. "So they do meet us with a band."

"Why not?" the Big Soldier says.

"I'll say this," remarks a soldier near them. "If they must have a band, it's better to use women than able-bodied men."

"Maybe the women are able-bodied, too," says the Little Soldier. "If that's the best job they got for them, why don't they discharge them?"

Amidships on the little excursion boat, behind the band, is a group of civilian girls. They are jumping up and down in feigned excitement and waving a frantic welcome. "Probably Junior Leaguers," the Little Soldier says. "Why the hell don't they stay in bed?"

"They look good to me, whoever they are," says the Big Soldier.

"One thing is sure," remarks a third soldier. "Meet one of them on Market Street tomorrow and you won't get any waves."

"Another thing is sure," says the Little Soldier. "You won't see Market Street. Unless you live there. Won't be any passes here."

The troops lining the rails watch the greeters coldly. The well-dressed civilian girls jump and wave. Somewhere along the ship's deck a soldier hauls from his pocket a long strip of toilet paper and solemnly waves it in return.

A tug now has the transport in charge and is bustling her into a pier. The excursion boat with its official greeters is romping down the bay to meet another transport coming through the Gate. On the end of the dock are two WAC's in fatigue pants and OD shirts. The men crowding the rail cut loose with whistles and wolf-calls. The WACs look up at the faces hanging over the ship's side. They show their distaste by turning their backs. The troops grow quiet again. They are getting home now. They're an old story already.

"I was thinking about that sign out in the bay," the Little Soldier says.

"Which sign?" asks the Big Soldier.

"The big one on the side of the hill. 'We're Proud Of You.' I've been wondering how to read it. I mean, where do you put the accent? 'We're Proud Of *You*.' That doesn't sound right. 'We're *Proud* Of You.' That's not it, either. And '*We're* Proud Of You' seems a little off, too. But I think I've got it. You read it like this. 'We're proud. Of *You*?'"

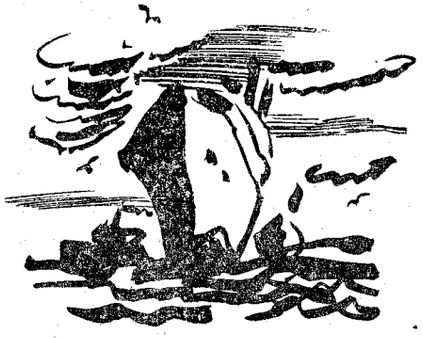
The Big Soldier looks at him. "What are you doing?" he asks. "Going anti-civilian?"

"Anti-civilian, hell," says the Little Soldier. "The greatest ambition of my life is to become one. I was practicing at it for years. I just wonder if I can become one again, I guess."

After a pause he says suddenly, "Do I sound like I'm not glad to get back? It's not that. It's just that I hate this goddamned army so much I can't wait any more. I can't take it any more. Why don't they leave us alone? Why don't they pay me off here? I can find my own way home."

Whistles blow and the troops are lined up for a rollcall. They scramble for their bags and shift about uneasily while their names are droned out until, as the last name is called, they are each in their proper place. They stand quietly, and nothing happens. They drift away again to line the rails or to sit in small knots on the hatches until a whistle blows again.

Hours later they start moving. They file down the gangway and are herded by Transportation Corps lieutenants into waiting buses. It is a short haul; only a few blocks down the waterfront to another pier.



Everything has an air of unreality; the men had thought too much and too long about Home. It seems now that they had forgotten what it would be like. Sights and sounds and smells; people, their faces, their attitudes. Everybody here on this waterfront street going about their business as though nothing had happened—all of it is at once amazingly new and at the same time very, very old and commonplace and ordinary. They had forgotten that there would be dirt in the gutters and that the bus driver would look tired and bored. Now, seeing it again, they knew that they hadn't forgotten it at all.

The troops are herded aboard a ferryboat. It is too small and they are uncomfortably crowded. But this is an old story, too. It seems, now that they think back, that the Army was always too small for them.

The San Francisco skyline dwindles as the ferryboat huffs into the bay toward Angel Island. At the island Transportation Corps lieutenants check the men as they file past, humped under their heavy bags. One by one the officers pull the Negro soldiers out of line.

The shipment is pure white when it reaches the assembly area. Behind is a small group of Negroes. There aren't many of them. They had lived with the white troops all the way across; they had slept with them and eaten with them and some of them had been in charge of details. They stand apart now. They are home.

It is Sunday morning. It is the troops' second day on Angel Island. They will not board trains for the East until tomorrow. The Big Soldier and the Little Soldier sit on a bench in the weak morning sun and look at the drab hills.

Because it is Sunday the telegraph office is closed. The PX is closed. The beer garden is closed.

"I missed breakfast this morning," says the Little Soldier, "so I stand in line for an hour and a half till the restaurant opens. For two and a half years I've been thinking that fresh scrambled eggs and bacon would make a wonderful breakfast. So I order scrambled eggs and bacon. The waiter looks at me, and he says, 'We don't have scrambled eggs. Just fried eggs.'"

"Yesterday afternoon," says the Big Soldier, "after they turned us loose, I went into the beer garden. The guy says, 'Sorry, bud, no more beer.' I asked him how come. 'Closing time,' he said. I told him it was only a quarter to six. He shrugged and said, 'There's no more beer.' On the way out I looked back. He was drawing a beer. For himself."

They watch a seagull wheel over the water.

"What are you going to do when you get out?" asks the Big Soldier.

"I'm not sure," says the Little Soldier. "But I'm going to claw a living out of this country somehow. There better never be a man who tries to stop me from living again."

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THOSE "ETHICAL" PUBLISHERS

By The EDITORS

A VARIETY of factors, among them political prejudices, enter into the selection of the several thousand titles published each year by the book publishers (excluding the textbook publishers). After this first selection there is a second in which prejudices also enter. The publisher picks three or four titles to which he allocates the greater part of his promotion budget. There is sometimes a third—and negative—selection, when a publisher changes his mind, voluntarily or under pressure, and refuses to print or distribute a book he has contracted to publish.

Two of Theodore Dreiser's novels were suppressed in this manner. The firm of E. P. Dutton & Co. recently settled out of court a suit for breach of contract after failing to issue a book on the German cartels and their American operations and connections. A case is now in litigation over the non-fulfillment of a contract by Doubleday to publish a book about Mexico that appears to be uncomfortably candid about the character of American interests there.

Turning to the review mediums which can make or break a book, we see similar factors operating. First there is the decision whether or not to review it at all. For not even the biggest of the mediums, the New York *Times Book Review*, undertakes to review everything. Numbers of progressive books do not survive that first elimination. There is a second, and in a positive sense, decisive sifting of the books through the choice of those to be "featured"—that is, placed in the front, given large space, decorated with the author's portrait or other illustrations and assigned "big name" reviewers. With occasional exceptions these are the same titles "pushed" by the publishers. Finally, when the book is of political interest, the reviewer is chosen according to his known "line," to do a rave or a slaughter as the publication's own "line" requires.

We have gone into these rather long prefatory paragraphs to make clear that the book publishing process is far from the politically neutral and "objective" procedure that the people in the book trade like to paint it. The cases we have given of outright suppression could be multiplied. With this in mind our readers will understand that any injured outcries from publishers and literary editors over our protest, here, against their shameful anti-Soviet campaign, merely adds hypocrisy to bias.

A dangerously large number of anti-Soviet books are being published this year, varying from a full length "satire" to be circulated by the mammoth Book-of-the-Month Club to books containing anti-Soviet asides; but here we will deal with only two (which will be reviewed in detail in future issues of NM). One of them is *I Chose Freedom* by the traitor Victor Kravchenko, who deserted his post in the midst of war. It was ghost-written by a notorious anti-Soviet hack. In this first, precarious year of the UN, to which the gentlemen who run Scribners have probably professed their best wishes, Kravchenko's book calls for a war against the Soviet Union. It is, of course, being used by Hearst and other such lovers of peace and democracy. The honorable men of Scribners have not merely published the book but made it their season's "leader," backing it with a large promotion campaign.

The book sections collaborated. They assigned it to safely anti-Soviet reviewers. The *Saturday Review of Literature*, for example, gave it to the "liberal" Dorothy Thompson whose worries about Soviet "imperialism" are suitably balanced by heartaches over the destitution of the defeated fascists.

The second of the two books is *Stalin*, by Leon Trotsky, published by the old-established firm of Harper's. This firm was capable of sufficient civic feeling to withdraw the book from circulation during the war. It has proved incapable of that civic feeling in the equally important struggle to win the peace. Explicitly and implicitly, the only forces that profit by the publication of this book are the forces agitating for an anti-Soviet war.

In their eager collaboration with the publishers, the press and radio gave wide circulation to Trotsky's statement that Stalin had poisoned Lenin. Imagine the shock here if, in a supposedly friendly country, an important publishing house and the national press and radio were giving circulation to a story that Truman had poisoned Roosevelt, to make sure of the accession to the presidency.

The executives of Harper's certainly know where Trotsky stood. They knew that Trotsky on Stalin was about as reliable as Goebbels on Stalin. Only an anti-Soviet propaganda motive can fully account for its publication.

THE picture comes clear in the significant contrast between the treatment of these two books and two others, one of which happens to deal with the anti-Soviet conspiracy, and the second with the chief surviving focus of fascism, Franco Spain.

The two books are *The Great Conspiracy: The Plot Against the Soviet Union*, by Michael Sayers and Albert E. Kahn, and *Wind in the Olive Trees: Franco Spain from the Inside*, by Abel Plenn. *The Great Conspiracy* found a large and established publisher during the war period—Little, Brown & Co.—but was not printed until this year. Plenn's book was not finished until after the war and was issued by the new firm of Boni & Gaer. Little, Brown issued *The Great Conspiracy* and gave it prominence in their catalogue, but bowed to the anti-Soviet storm and failed to push the book. In spite of the fact that it contained sensational revelations about Winston Churchill, among other headliners, and that every item was carefully documented, the news editors blandly ignored it. While the book could not be ignored by the literary editors, because of the standing of both the publishers and the authors, it was relegated to back pages and discussed with the sneering deprecation that experience has shown to be particularly effective in literary sniping. *Wind in the Olive Trees* was almost entirely ignored. Spain is constantly in the news, yet the only recent inside book on Spain could find no city editor and not ever a *Times* reviewer to acknowledge its existence.

This contrast makes clear what is happening. With few exceptions, the publishing industry has plunged deeper than ever before into the anti-Soviet swim.

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I INTERVIEW TWO WITCH-HUNTERS

Our Washington editor talks with two GOP Rankin Committeemen. Rep. Mundt is a firm defender of free speech and press — for anti-Semites.

By VIRGINIA GARDNER

Third of a series on the Rankin Committee.

Washington

AFTER talking to some of the liberal members of the Un-American Activities Committee, who told me how unhappy they were or assured me they were serving on the committee only to keep it from being worse, it was a positive relief to talk to two Republican members, Rep. Karl Mundt of South Dakota and Rep. Gerald Landis of Indiana. Rep. Mundt is what might be called a career witch-hunter. Rep. Landis, on the other hand, lies low and is thankful he hasn't been singled out for attack. Neither man speaks of lofty motives in serving on the Wood-Rankin committee. Each, keeping his district in mind, is being an eminently "practical politician." In South Dakota labor is not much of a factor in an election, but in Indiana, what he calls "the Communists" gave Rep. Landis some trouble in the last election. It's as simple as that.

There's nothing like talking to a reactionary who gets down to brass tacks as Rep. Mundt does. It is a favorite contention of his that, as he put it in questioning William Z. Foster, head of the Communist Party, earlier in the year, "it is entirely conceivable that something can be legal and still be un-American." On one occasion Rep. Mundt serenely told me that there was not much the committee could do about people like myself, members of the Communist Party. All it could do was "expose," and that usually was "corrective."

By his admission Rep. Mundt in fact laid bare the whole philosophy of the smear. The committee cannot claim it is illegal to be a Communist. But it can "expose" members of other organizations—which it labels "Communist-front." By saying that something may be legal which the committee may classify as "un-American" Mundt makes it obvious that the committee's standards of what is un-American are purely subjective. It makes its own undemocratic standards, and, outside and above the law, sets up devices, in the typical manner of fascism, to impose the will of a minority on the people. After the committee sets up its own reactionary criteria as to what is un-American, it employs intimidation. It can be most effective because it is a Congressional committee. It can hit where it hurts—it can set up economic sanctions, "exposing" so that its victims are deprived of their livelihood. Yet Rep. Mundt, by admitting it is not illegal to be a Communist, suggests that the committee couldn't get a law saying otherwise, or, if it did, that it would be unconstitutional.

When I alluded to the Brookings Institution's handbook on what is un-American and what should be the committee's proceedings, a handbook which it compiled on the committee's request, I was told that the committee hadn't "accepted" the institution's findings. Rep. Mundt said the committee had arrived at a definition of un-Americanism, but it was too long and involved to summarize.

I asked Rep. Mundt if the committee had the power to subpoena an organization's books and financial records before it had even investigated or made findings on the organization. He replied blandly, pointing to a sheaf of papers, that it had heard numerous witnesses against the Joint Anti-Fascist Refugee Committee. All these, of course, were heard in secret hearings, outside the presence of anyone connected with JAFRC, none of whom had a chance to refute the testimony of these unknown witnesses.

REP. MUNDT was his usual busy, cheerful self when I interviewed him. He had just dashed over to appear with a flock of his own amendments before a House committee considering OPA extension. He is always in an expansive mood, this Congressman from the plains of South Dakota, where the Pennsylvania Pews, the Chicago *Tribune's* Col. Robert R. McCormick and the DuPonts, in 1942, and GOP committees from wealthy eastern states such as Pennsylvania and Ohio in 1940, had contributed to elect the Republican ticket. The phone rang frequently and Mundt held forth to his favorite newspaper reporters on his OPA amendments. Or he gave his opinions on other topics. Smoking his cigar happily, his answers were occasionally terse, such as his reply to one caller: "The Big Three is out. It's the Big Two from now on." Again he picked up the phone. What? Adamson [Ernie Adamson, the Un-American committee's counsel] had given that out—that there was to be a hearing in another city on atom spies? Then he had slipped up, because they hadn't voted on one yet. "Unless it's something he and Wood cooked up between themselves."

Rep. Mundt is the glibbest member of the Un-American committee, and he was generous with his time—unlike Rep. John Rankin, who had refused to see me. He is an ingratiating fellow, and he is frank—up to a point. He chatted about the days when he traveled about speaking "in an effort to keep us out of war." I asked him if he had ever addressed an America First rally. Yes, he thought he had, on one occasion, here in Washington—he thought it might have been an America First meeting, he was not sure. And when Laura Ingalls, convicted as an unregistered Nazi agent, was arrested, weren't some of his speeches found in her possession? One speech only, he thought. "But I'd never even heard of the gal," he smiled urbanely.

He has all the airs of a sophisticated, civilized person. He hadn't made up his mind about the National Council of American-Soviet Friendship, he said grandly, this arbiter of what Americanism is or isn't. He even deigned to say gratuitously, "I thought Corliss Lamont [its chairman] a pretty decent guy."

When asked what purpose it could serve to get the books of the organizations under attack—other than to obtain names of contributors who might be intimidated—he replied that the committee was interested only in seeing "where the money comes from and where it goes." But on the floor of the

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House later he advised contributors "to refrain from further contributions until we discover the true record of the facts." And there he cited the discredited renegade ex-Communist, Louis Budenz, who appeared before the committee accompanied by a Notre Dame University priest, as an authority—though progressives are not allowed to appear with counsel. Budenz' stereotyped slander against the Communist Party, that "every American Communist is a potential spy," was repeated solemnly by Rep. Mundt in his effort to whip up a witch-hunt atmosphere to get through a resolution to press charges against sixteen JAFRC board members.

On the subject of anti-Semitism Rep. Mundt maintains a fine objectivity. "Is it true, would you say, that the committee is attacking groups which fight against anti-Semitism—such as the National Committee to Combat Anti-Semitism?" I asked. The National Federation for Constitutional Liberties, whose chairman, George Marshall, has been recommended by the committee, like Corliss Lamont, for a contempt citation, has stated that "Rankin's flagrant anti-Semitism is directly reflected in the Un-American Committee," which "attacked the NCCAS for petitioning Congress to condemn race hatred." The Un-American committee also has attacked the Veterans Against Discrimination, who were told by Adamson in a committee letter that "this country was not organized as a democracy."

Rep. Mundt said he had not heard of the NCCAS, but he went on to say smoothly: "We haven't discussed an investigation of either side of the Semitic issue."

"I don't understand what you mean by 'either side of the Semitic issue,'" I said to the Congressman who once told me he was "neither Jewish nor anti-Jewish." "You are against anti-Semitism, I take it?" I asked.

"I'm against it, of course," replied the former social science teacher judiciously, throwing back his blond head and assuming a philosophical air, "but I don't see any relation between un-American activity and the Semitic question."

There you have it, straight from the horse's mouth. The committee just isn't interested in that sort of un-American activity.

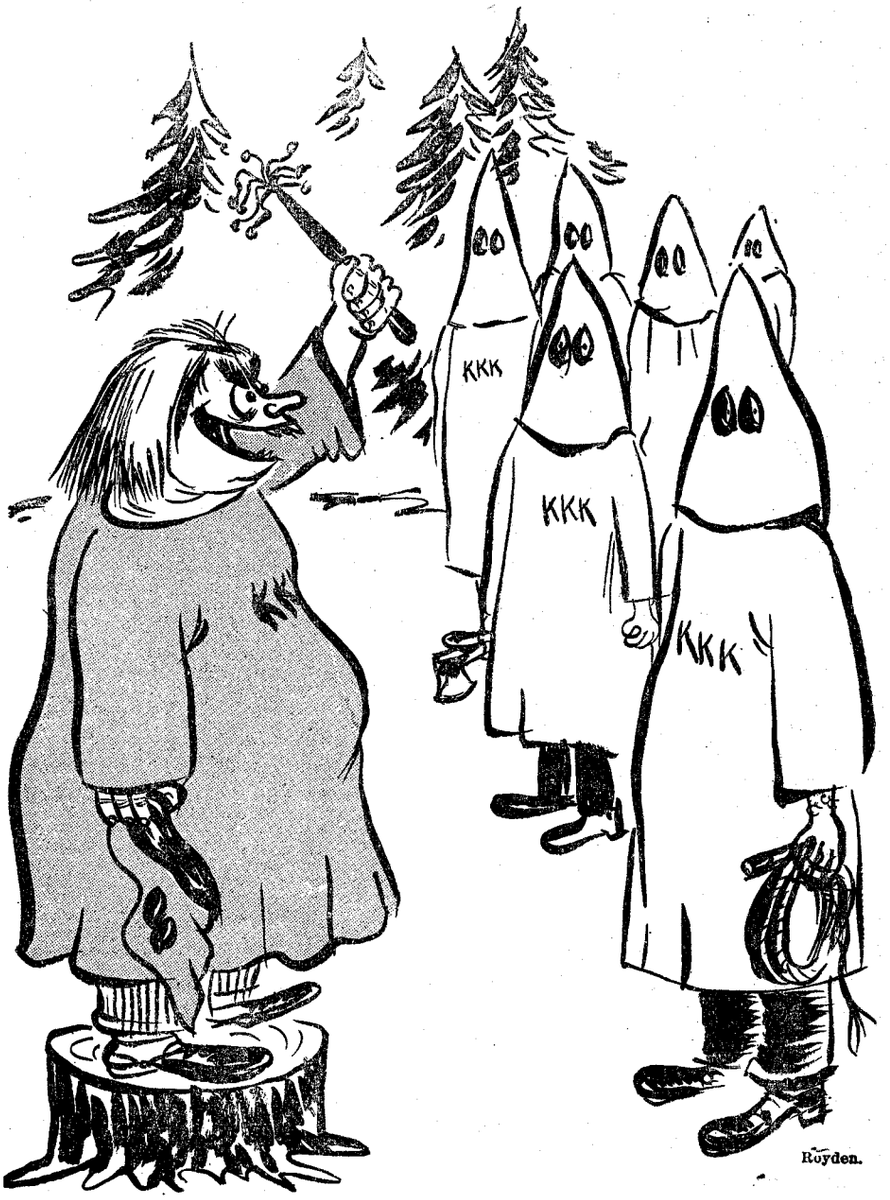
"Do you consider that anti-Semitism is not un-American?" I asked.

"It is not un-American to dislike another individual," he said. "But if that antipathy takes on the form of organized effort to prohibit the rights of an individual to function freely it might be un-American. Still, it would be legal." Of course, he said, some people wanted to pass a federal law making it illegal. "But where are we going to draw the line in freedom of the press and speech?" He indicated the difficulties it presented. In some places people didn't like the Irish, in others the British, or the Swedes. There are many minorities. And Rep. Mundt is a staunch defender of a free press and free speech.

But of course the fascist fuehrer, Gerald L. K. Smith, in his testimony before the committee, also defended a free press and free speech. And he claimed that "Jewish gestapo groups" were interfering with his freedom of speech. He was asked by Rep. J. Parnell Thomas, for instance, "What is this Jewish problem that you refer to?" So Smith spoke of the "rising tide of anti-Semitism" and added: ". . . is it to continue to be an unpardonable sin in America to criticize the opinion of a Jew? I can criticize an Irishman and Pat just gets mad at me. I can criticize a Methodist preacher and he answers me . . . but he doesn't organize the black book and index file among all Methodists to run me down. . . ." Then he proceeded to give the committee the names of "gestapo groups" he wanted investigated.

Rep. Mundt told me how the Dies

This Week's Rankest



"Ain't it great to be back in uniform!"—Sen. Rankest.

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committee had assembled a huge dossier on over 100 anti-Semitic organizations, had the report printed, and decided not to make it public "because it would just give them free advertising." "Martin had a lot of friends among rabbis," he said, "and he showed them the report, and they advised him not to make it public. After all, the Jews were the people who were hurt by these organizations."

ON THE subject of the committee's record to date Rep. Mundt was pretty frank. He admitted the committee's "investigation" of "subversive" radio scripts written for OPA was a "bust." He couldn't say whether the Hollywood investigation—the only one he admitted had originated with Rep. Rankin — would produce anything — although Ernie Adamson, committee counsel, had told me he was still working on it. Rep. Mundt said the committee "hasn't established a trend as yet." Generally, the committee confined itself to things "with international implications." This was coming pretty close to admitting it tried to influence our foreign policy.

Recalling that the National Council of American-Soviet Friendship had charged that the Un-American committee was jeopardizing friendly relations with the Soviet Union, I asked if the committee singled out that organization just because it was working for friendly relations with the USSR. "No, if that was all they were doing I'd join it," he said. But as to the implied other things the organization was doing—he was keeping an open mind.

As other committee members had done, he explained the way the committee worked. Someone wrote in asking for an investigation, and the complaint was investigated—not always, but if they thought it was warranted. Thus the alleged basis for the JAFRC investigation, which Adamson and others are fond of mentioning, is a vast number of complaints. They usually do not mention that they were identical postcards mailed by the Catholic War Veterans, Inc., in New York. Strangely enough, it is only the complaints against progressive organizations which receive attention from the committee. Thus, according to the pro-labor newspaper *Challenge*, published in Denver, Harvey Springer, Colorado's disciple of Gerald L. K. Smith and the indicted seditionist, Rev. Gerald Winrod, appealed to the Wood-Rankin committee to send an investigator to Denver, and it has complied. In a week's time, says *Challenge*, the investigator, or so he told the Republican women of Denver, "investigated" the Communist Party, the labor movement, a veteran's organization, an atomic energy council, the University of Colorado, the University of Denver, and *Challenge*. And all this he did without going near any of the groups "investigated," said the paper in an editorial in its April 28 issue.

Rep. Mundt was revealingly frank on the subject of the Smith hearing. "The committee members as a whole aren't very well satisfied about the Smith hearings," he said easily. He was out of town at the time and had not read the testimony. "Some individual Congressmen had said they knew a lot about Smith. So we said, 'Let's let them present their charges.' When he came before us, none came around to say anything. They left the committee on the hook. We were far from ready to call him in." He didn't add, however, that the Congressmen in question had been willing to question Smith—*if* assured they could subpoena records and witnesses and have the resources of the committee's staff and records.

But what results did he think the committee had achieved?

"We maintain a very active file," he said with apparent satisfaction. "We have had 435 requests from government agencies. The old Dies committee files have been augmented and are being completely revitalized and reindexed, cross-files made. It's a big job."

Thus the blacklist is still operating, and any little government clerk who at one time gave a dollar to Republican Spain or some other liberal cause is out on the street if the committee, or some member or investigator for it, points his finger at her. Doubtless the committee's ultimate aim is to have a giant blacklist it can use in the same way in private industry.

Rep. Mundt denied vigorously that the committee was Rankin-controlled. He pointed to the unanimity of most of the votes. Then, slyly: "Why, the bunch that is always after us—De Lacy, Marcantonio, the Californians—are always talking about how they can count on the liberals on the committee. What for? Whenever there's a vote, they vote with us— or stay away."

REP. LANDIS, newest Republican on the committee, chewing a cigar and spitting accurately into a spittoon which appeared to be an alarming distance from where he sat, was mildly defensive about the committee. He thought it was "making a contribution," and added reflectively:

"Our committee has been smeared some. They haven't jumped on me. I've been pretty careful about what I said. I contended we should give 'em a fair trial. Now Smith named Eddie Cantor, Ingrid Bergman, Orson Welles and Frank Sinatra as Communists. So far as I'm concerned—and I said it and had it put in the record—I wouldn't take anyone's recommendation unless there was proof." He appeared visibly proud of introducing this novel idea in the committee. "Of course," he added laconically, "we've got an investigator out now on Smith's charges."

I asked if there was any interest in his district in these matters—meaning witch-hunts. But he apparently understood my question to mean was there any interest in Communism. Why, yes, he said, and launched into an account of how "they" organized a committee in the Indiana State University at Bloomington, in 1944, and put on radio programs attacking him. Now it happened that I had heard one of these programs when I was in Indiana investigating Ku Klux Klan elements supporting the GOP slate in that campaign. It was a program attacking the isolationist record of the Congressman. I had been told it was backed by both Democratic and Republican professors.

"Were these people Communists?" I asked Rep. Landis.

"Communists—or liberals—PAC—whatever they were—they leaned toward extreme internationalism," he said, spitting reflectively. Rep. Landis is not one to be bothered by fine distinctions.

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MR. BYRNES BEARING GIFTS

An Editorial by JOHN STUART

IN THE higher echelons of American diplomacy I don't think there is anyone who compares with Secretary Byrnes in acting technique. As a former student in the dramatic workshops of the House and Senate he has learned how to dignify rough-and-tumble politics through a honeyed inflection of voice. It is a voice that flows in a slow-rolling tremor and its modulations are in the most obnoxious tradition of pulpit oratory. With it he has more than once tried to sell the devil's own pitchfork to the unsuspecting.

I doubt whether in Paris the voice and the hamming will work. So apparently does Mr. Byrnes. From the American side there seems to be detailed and exhaustive preparation. Every foreseeable move has been studied; the maps carefully drawn; the trading prices established. The administration is not depending on Byrnes' mellifluous tenor to do the whole job of making the United States landlord over the European continent. And that is precisely his job at the Paris Conference. Of course, most everything the State Department delegation presents is heavily lacquered with moralisms. But when the lacquer is scraped away it is the old market-hungry, dollar-hungry, power-hungry business that comes to the surface.

It would be the summit of folly to believe that US intentions in Paris differ from US intentions in the Bronx. American policy is exactly the same for both places. Outwardly the forms and methods of combat vary. In the Security Council, Mr. Stettinius attempts to reach his objectives by corralling votes. Mr. Byrnes tries to get there by threats to sign separate peace treaties perhaps with Italy, perhaps with this state or that. When you are out to break up the wartime coalition and replace it by an Anglo-American bloc in which the dominant power is the United States, you use blasting devices that conform to the locale and size of the job.

In the first days of the Conference, American newspapers literally bubbled over about the Soviets' "conciliatory" attitude. American journalism by and large works on the assumption that if there is any conciliating to be done, the Russians will have to do it. Washington is invariably presumed to be fairminded, generous, completely gracious. That, unfortunately for the mythmakers, is something which a large part of the world refuses to believe. But it is worth recording because even on the psychological plane all the little or big missionaries of American imperialism are now engaged in establishing the nonsense that all peoples outside our borders are grasping, backward and intractable. If they want anything they must accommodate themselves to us, for our nobility of purpose can never be challenged.

Such is Mr. Byrnes' frame of mind, as it is no doubt that of President Truman. With that kind of superior attitude toward Europe's needs and interests—the rich uncle bestowing largess on his poor and unruly nephews — the peace is bound to be a prelude to war. It is a psychology that damages the American people abroad, and the truth is that in the past several months Europeans have come to dislike us heartily. The Pole, for example, cannot understand why, when his government is given an American loan, the Americans also tell him how to run his country; tell him in effect not to vote for anyone who places Polish democracy above US imperialist interests.

MR. BYRNES may think he is endearing himself to all when he persistently attempts to put the Soviets on the spot. No doubt his political value does increase with the big-money boys. But there are many peoples who ask the common-sense question: if he is continually trying to back the Russians up against a wall, to put them on the spot, what guarantee is there that he will not attempt to do the same with them even though they are not Russians? Too many Europeans are not so certain that the get-rough-with Russia strategy will end there. And the consequence is that the prestige which Americans gained on the battlefield is fast ebbing and in its place there is a rising fear of our "noble" purposes.

Last week Mr. Byrnes proposed a twenty-five-year Four Power treaty to keep Germany disarmed. The New York *Times*, which always sneezes twice when it looks as though Mr. Byrnes is reaching for a handkerchief, greeted this draft treaty as a revolutionary departure in American foreign policy. Mr. Byrnes himself hailed the proposal as one guaranteeing American participation in European affairs, as signifying the abandonment of past "isolationism," and as answering Europe's fears about its future security. When you carefully examine the draft treaty, however, you wonder what is in it that is not already in the Yalta and Potsdam agreements, which we and the British continually violate.

What Europe worries and wonders about now is not whether the United States will retreat into an isolationist shell. In point of fact the United States has not been out of Europe for the last thirty years. Her absence from the League of Nations meant merely that Washington was not involving itself in European currents in a direct sense. But Europe was not Geneva and the United States through economic and political penetration swung its weight around in European affairs as though she had a seat in the League. The issue, therefore, is not one of "isolation" but on what terms the United States will shape the European future, and Germany's in particular. Will it be one of cooperation on terms of equality with the other leading Allies? Will it be one of building up the tattered German ruling class, which in time will spawn another Hitler? Will it attempt to break the power of the Junkers and replace them with new, healthy forces from a unified German labor movement? If the United States has already made such a miserable mess of throttling the source of German aggression —as former Secretary of the Treasury Morgenthau has charged repeatedly— why will the United States observe a long-range treaty any better?

In principle there can be no objection to political agreements which bind the Allies closer in keeping German and Japanese fascism from ever coming to the fore again. But Mr. Byrnes will have to prove that he means just that by fulfilling the Potsdam commitments *now*. Thus far the record of his and Mr. Truman's stewardship is nothing short of a grand betrayal.

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BLACKSHIRTS UNDER TOGAS

In Italy, on the eve of elections for the Constituent Assembly, the most arrant pro-fascist forces masquerade as "defenders of democracy."

By S. SLOBODSKOY

Moscow (by cable).

RECENTLY the Italian government adopted a decision to convoke a Constituent Assembly, elections for which are to take place on June 2. True, the law governing the Constituent Assembly and the method chosen for deciding the fate of the monarchy by means of a referendum restrict the Assembly's sovereignty and powers. They also bear the impress of compromise forced upon the Italian democrats by internal and external reactionary and conservative forces. Nevertheless, the Assembly should at last provide the Italian people with the opportunity of finding a way out of their present crisis.

Until now Italy's internal state of affairs has prevented the people from extirpating the remnants of fascism and of introducing necessary reforms. Forces which at one time called fascism into being still control, mainly with outside assistance, key economic and political positions; and they still hope to bridle the Italian people once more.

Recently the London *Economist* wrote that the heads of the largest Italian corporations were still "incredibly wealthy" and that at the present time they were "in one way or another mostly associated with the Liberal Party in Italy." "This perhaps explains," surmises the *Economist*, "why their contacts with the Allied authorities are so much better than those of other Italians." The possessions and privileges of the big landowners who formed the bulwark of the fascist regime have remained intact. The higher Italian aristocracy, far from having suffered any damage after the liberation of Italy, have become a valuable support of the present reaction. Today they serve as important links between the forces of Italian and international reaction. Generals who tied their fate to that of the fascist regime still occupy their posts. And to this day, organizers of fascist pogroms as well as war criminals are to be found in the ranks of the army and police force. They display their hatred of democracy by ruffian attacks on workers, organizations and parties of the Left.

Among those who inspire the pro-fascist reaction are many members of the higher clergy. At one time, prompted by instructions from the Vatican as well as by their own convictions, they collaborated very closely with Mussolini. In particular there is Cardinal Schuster, Archbishop of Milan. About this Prince of the Church, the Swiss newspaper, *Neue Zuercher Zeitung*, stated in its issue of March 2, 1944, that before the war "Milanese didn't know who actually was secretary of the provincial Fascist party organization—[the incumbent at that time] or Cardinal Schuster." Under the leadership of former pillars of fascism of this type are thousands of priests, nuns and numerous religious brotherhoods and secular organizations. For example, Scorza, the former secretary of the Fascist party and the bloodiest of butchers, found refuge in a Catholic monastery.

It is true that among the Italian clergy there are those who have taken an active part in the national liberation movement and stand for collaboration with the democratic parties. But there were also clergymen who were members of fascist organizations. These spied on other Italians and molded the minds of the young people to suit their ends. They are today the most dangerous instruments of pro-fascist reaction. The Catholic Church, carrying out instructions from the Vatican, takes them all to its loving bosom with unexampled benevolence and forgiveness. Heads of the reactionary camp utilize them in a crusade against "godless Marxism."

In Italy the common banner of all reactionary pro-fascist forces today is monarchism and clericalism; but even the most arrant fascists as a rule don the toga of "democrats," "liberals," of ardent "champions of freedom" and "enemies of tyranny." They form the legal groups which operate under such labels as the Constitutional Democratic Party, the Party of Christian Reconstruction, the Democratic Party, the Liberal-Democratic Concentration, the Democratic Center and so forth. The political influence and the mass base of these groups are meager. They recruit their supporters mainly from among the propertied classes and to a large extent from among the elements tainted with collaboration. These isolated reactionary cliques and some of their foreign protectors are trying to repeat the fascist experiment of 1919 and 1922. Their aim is to create a wide mass movement which would ostensibly be "independent" and champion the "common people" while in reality it would be a weapon in the hands of the anti-popular forces.

There is no lack of organizers for such a movement. Among them are many fascists who have been cleared out of government offices, as well as those who still remain. There are unprincipled politicians, venal journalists, lawyers, shady businessmen, adventurers and political werewolves who served Mussolini for twenty years and are now naturally anxious about their fate and careers. They are bound together by their common fear of the masses. They are ready to commit any crime against the interests of Italy. They constitute the real Fifth Column.

Nor can one close his eyes to the fact that in Italy today—an Italy encountering enormous economic and political difficulties—there are elements which are trapped by the fascist demagogy as adapted to the new setup. In addition to avowed and tacit advocates of fascism there are social groups which, although disillusioned about fascism, have not yet by any means shaken off fascist ideology. These people have lost their bearings and are unable to find their way in the labyrinth of political parties.

There is also a large number of people whose accustomed way of life has been rudely intruded upon by war and economic ruin. They are the unemployed, the ex-servicemen, the returned prisoners of war, minor office employes—all of whom have suffered as a result of the high cost of living.

Certain political leaders and groups in the anti-fascist camp also serve as

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conscious or unconscious agents of foreign and domestic reaction. Some of them even belong to the coalition of the six anti-fascist parties. Under all sorts of pretexts, they have tried to postpone the introduction of urgent reforms, to emasculate them when they were being passed, and to sabotage them after they were passed.

Recently these circles have displayed extraordinary resourcefulness in delaying the settlement of questions connected with the convocation of the Constituent Assembly. The sole purpose of all the proposals they advanced this ran counter to the international agreements on the democratization of Italy. It was only as a result of the pressure of the democratic forces that they were compelled to abandon some of their proposals.

These politicians are distinguished for their political cowardice and duplicity. A great many of them dare not openly defy the overwhelming majority of their respective parties, whose sentiments are definitely anti-monarchist. To this day these political chameleons avoid giving straightforward answers to the question of whether they

ence of a fascist danger in Italy. One can understand why: they are interested in promoting the legend that fascism has been completely liquidated so that the fascist elements may carry on their activities with impunity. For example, at the end of January the newspaper *Italia Nuovo*, organ of the reactionary monarchist Democratic Party, assured the British Laborites "there's no longer any room in Italy for neo-Fascism of the Mussolini persuasion. We are safe from that danger forever."

But the time soon arrived when it became impossible, and in the opinion

"During the Terror," pen sketch by Renaldo Gussutto, Italian Resistance artist.

during stormy meetings of the Consultative Assembly was to hinder and to complicate and to put off the elections. They also intended to curtail the prerogatives of the Constituent Assembly by depriving it of jurisdiction over the vital question of the monarchy and to delay the creation of an authoritative and popular representative body. As in all their activities directed against a thorough liquidation of the fascist heritage, they in this case also received assistance from the outside, although

stand for a republic or a monarchy. Actually they are pursuing the policy they undertook after World War I which in the long run led to the establishment of a fascist regime in Italy.

The fascists and their abettors have succeeded in creating a more or less extensive mass movement, headed by the fascist journalist Guglielmo Giannini and bearing the name *Fronte l'Uomo Qualunque* ("common man's front"). Nevertheless, representatives of the reactionary camp deny the pres-

of some unprofitable, to hush up the growth of the fascists in Italy. Preparations began for the municipal elections and for the election of the Constituent Assembly. So far the enemies of democracy have failed to drive a wedge between the Communists and the Socialists and bring about a split in the coalition of the six anti-fascist parties. This enrages the reactionaries and prompts them to exert the utmost effort in their legal and illegal preparations to participate in the elections and

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if possible to make a travesty of them. The Qualunque front being the only force in the reactionary camp that may be described as a mass organization, it has become the repository of all pro-fascist elements.

Judging by certain evidence the Qualunque movement is being encouraged and supported by influential foreign circles. According to *Avanti*, Major Randolph Churchill, son of Winston Churchill, visited Italy last January and wrote a series of articles in which he praised the Qualunque movement. In the same month *Il Buon Senso*, Giannini's newspaper, published two articles by Randolph Churchill, the tenor of which coincided with the line taken by that newspaper.

For the forthcoming elections leaders of two monarchist organizations, the Democratic Center and the so-called Liberal Democratic Concentration, adopted a decision to enter into a bloc with the Qualunque movement. Later the Democratic Party, whose organ, *Italia Nuovo*, has so earnestly assured world public opinion there was no fascist danger in Italy, also entered into close alliance with the Qualunquists.

IT HAS been proved that active in the legal monarchist organizations and in the Qualunque movement in particular are many camouflaged agents of Mussolini's neo-Fascist party who went underground when the fascist regime collapsed. The policy of forming the Qualunque-Monarchist bloc virtually signifies an attempt to create a united front of all fascist and pro-fascist elements. A number of provincial congresses and the national congress of Qualunque, held in Rome in the middle of February, served in their way as a review of the forces of the Italian fascists.

It goes without saying that Giannini and his friends do not come out openly under the flag of fascism. Officially they dissociate themselves from the Mussolini regime and pose as ardent champions of democracy. But this window-dressing can deceive only those who refuse to heed the lessons of the past. In 1919 Mussolini said "we want freedom for all, we want to be governed by the will of all and not by the will of one group or one man." Today Giannini echoes Mussolini, proclaiming that "Qualunque is uncompromisingly hostile to all forms of totalitarianism and personal dictatorship and demands full self-government for the human individual. The state must not be the master but the servant."

Under the cover of demagogic rhetoric of this kind the Qualunque leaders are conducting vicious campaigns of slander against the "predominance" of the bloc of anti-fascist parties and particularly against the Socialists and Communists. Giannini proclaims socialism and communism to be "a new form of feudalism." He and his associates, however, strongly emphasize their loyalty to the Catholic Church. One resolution adopted at the Qualunque congress demands the recognition of Catholicism as a state religion. More or less cautiously Giannini has come out in defense of the monarchy, covering up that defense with the specious argument that it is a matter of indifference to Qualunque who is at the head of the state as long as the people enjoy freedom.

Even moderate liberal and Catholic newspapers have admitted that the language used by Giannini was reminiscent of the "cannibal language of fascism." And in general the Qualunque congresses show that there is today an open movement in Italy which in the spirit of its aims closely resembles fascism in the incipient stage. One of the distinctive features of this movement, however, is that profiting by the experience of fascism and evidently operating in conformity with definite instructions from the reactionary clerical and monarchist cliques financing it and from their foreign protectors, it is from the outset taking a line of serving Church and monarchy.

A glaring light on the fascist character of the Monarchists-Qualunque bloc and on the general temper of the anti-popular forces in Italy was thrown by Emilio Patrissi, secretary of the monarchist Liberal Democratic Concentration in a speech he delivered conveying greetings of his organization to the Qualunque congress. "The cause of all our misfortunes," he said, "is that on the heels of the victorious troops, our country was invaded by packs of hyenas and jackals, renegades who for twenty years have been conspiring against our motherland and who have now risen on its ruins, on its sufferings and its poverty. They have sunk their claws into the tortured body of our country and are disseminating hatred."

This insolent challenge thrown in the faces of fighters against fascism and this unconcealed identification of twenty years of fascist dictatorship with the "motherland," emanating from the leader of an organization represented in the Consultative Assembly, could not fail to make a deep impression upon Italian public opinion. After this speech it became impossible to conceal further the existence and activity of a legal fascist organization in Italy.

At a meeting of the Consultative Assembly the question was raised of expelling Patrissi from the Assembly as an avowed fascist, but nothing came of it. Count Sforza, president of the assembly, chiding Patrissi in a fatherly way, said, "Patrissi may repent when he realizes what enormous harm is caused to Italy by the fact that a section of her public is still imbued with fascism."

It goes without saying that Count Sforza's reproof hasn't in the least deterred the arrogant pro-fascists and fascists. On the contrary, their utterances in the press are becoming more and more insolent and are assuming an obviously provocative character.

The reactionary *Italia Sera* recently published an article by a certain Amedeo Tosti, a former fascist military commentator who during the war conducted propaganda against the United Nations. This Hitlerite flunkey, insisting heatedly on the inevitability of a third war, demands that Italy be granted the right "immediately to re-establish her military organs" in the interest not only of Italy, but of all those who "intend to take immediate and effective measures to save Western civilization."

Utterances of this kind show how the activities of fascist and pro-fascist groups are helped by agents of international reaction, whose propaganda calls for a new war and sows discord among the peoples longing for peace. All this only proves once again the vital importance of unity among all peace-loving democratic forces and the imperative necessity of completing the liquidation of fascism in all countries.

★ ★ ★

A three-day tag day appeal to save the lives of 1,487,000 orphaned and desperately ill Yugoslav children will be launched in New York City on May 16, and in other cities from coast to coast during the month. This tag day collection is a highlight of the campaign of the American Committee for Yugoslav Relief to collect $5,000,000 to purchase medical supplies and equipment in this country for the health program of the Yugoslav government.

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review and comment

WHAT HAPPENED BACK HOME

Reports on wartime America for vets, ranging from real information to misleading hypocrisy.

By EPHIM G. FOGEL

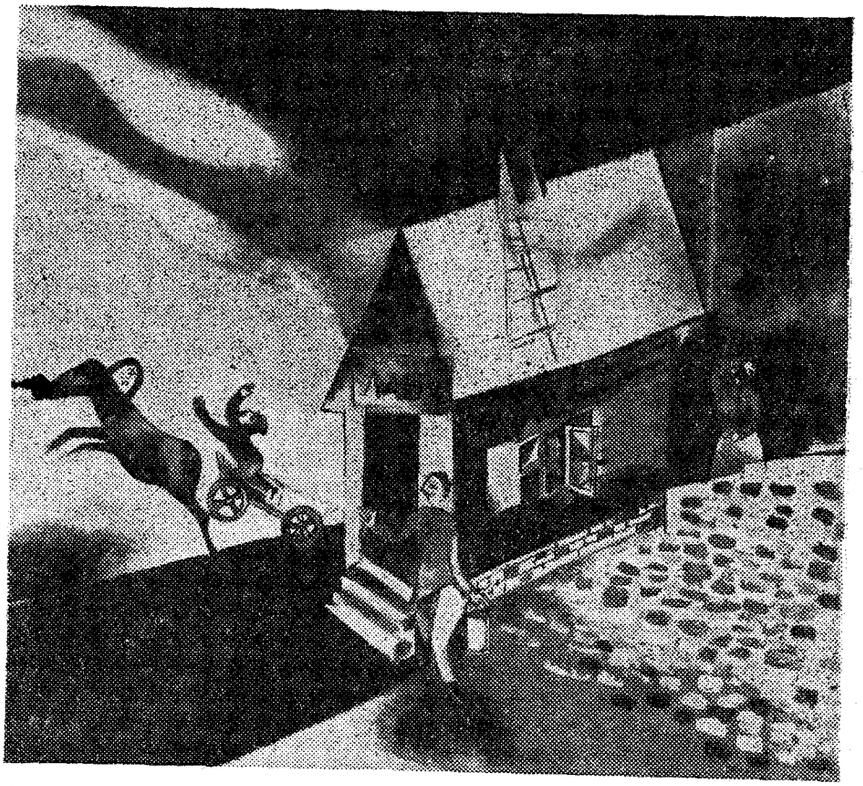
WHILE YOU WERE GONE: A Report on Wartime Life in the United States. *Edited by Jack Goodman, Simon & Schuster. $3.50.*

THIS "capsule over-all survey of the way life was lived . . . in the United States during the war against Axis aggression" is not nearly as useful to veterans as such a book might be. Its twenty-four chapters, distributed through five main sections — "How We Thought and Behaved;" "How We Were Governed;" "Our Jobs and How We Did Them;" "What We Saw, Read and Heard;" "How We Prepared for Tomorrow"—vary from the honest and informative through the dull and unenlightening to the hypocritical and misleading. All in all, it does not add up to $3.50 worth. (How many recently discharged veterans are able to pay that kind of money for a book?)

All the contributors are faced with a common problem. How shall one assess a major sector of life in a country in which the contradictions of monopoly capitalism are present in their starkest form and which was also one of the leading powers in a war against fascism? A true evaluation would have to consider the struggle of the democratic forces in America against the inertia and violent resistance of the reactionary forces centered in the trusts. None of the writers puts the issue precisely in these terms, but each is confronted with it, and the honesty with which each presents it is a measure of the effectiveness of his contribution.

From this point of view, some of the chapters do, on the whole, inform and clarify. R. J. Thomas, writing on "What Labor Did," not only explodes the myths of astronomical wartime wages and of widespread wartime strikes fostered by the big-money press but also gives a clear picture of the democratic structure and function of a typical trade union. Carey McWilliams offers a thoughtful analysis of progress made by minority groups, warning that "most of the gains made by minorities since the war . . . are highly precarious in nature," and are involved with other national and international issues, such as full employment and a stable peace. Thomas Stokes presents the sordid record of the 77th, 78th and 79th Congresses which voted for reaction on most vital domestic issues. True, he weakens his indictment by a mechanical separation of domestic and foreign affairs, concluding that Congress "acted with courage and vision" in the latter sphere. Nevertheless, he vividly demonstrates that "Congress attended first to business and industry," and consistently sabotaged labor and the people. Jonathan Daniels' moving tribute to FDR's wartime role is, perhaps, more personal than profound, but it is valuable as a reminder of what our late President stood for. Mr. Daniels does not make the contrast between Franklin Roosevelt and his successor. The record, however, speaks for itself.

Set down the following chapters on the credit side of the ledger and you have summarized whatever is positive in *While You Were Gone*: "What Happened to the Younger People," by Anna Wolf and Irma S. Black; "The Women in the War," by Margaret Mead; "The World of Sports," by Dan Parker; "What the Animals Were Up To," a comic interlude by



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James Thurber; and "The Radio" by Norman Corwin, a chapter distinguished for its forthrightness, fairness and absence of log-rolling. Wolcott Gibbs' pages on "The Theater" are generally good but are vitiated by that occasional *New Yorker* practice of sacrificing accuracy for cleverness. ("*Harriet* . . . captivated that special audience which would pay handsomely to hear Miss Helen Hayes read a cookbook, but it was without dramatic significance and can be ignored.") Milton Caniff's claim that the comic strips fathomed "the real function of art in wartime" is downright silly; besides, this partisan reviewer feels that Mr. Caniff skims much too lightly over Crockett Johnson's *Barnaby*, a superior pen-and-ink feature.

Many of the remaining chapters can be listed in the useless category, either because of their shallow treatment of important material or because they add little, if anything, to the veterans' present knowledge. But the most severe criticisms must be reserved for those chapters which in one way or another sanctify American monopoly capitalism.

DO NOT think that the halos are painted crudely by these apologists. In varying degrees they admit that their idols may indeed have sinned. But how coyly and incompletely the admissions are made and how swiftly the layers of whitewash are applied to the spotty plaster saints! Donald Nelson's hosannahs to the NAM and the Chamber of Commerce in his chapter, "What Industry Did," are truly touching: "From my personal observation, I can say that the great majority of American industries did not try to make big profits out of war production." Monopolies hogging patents vital to the war effort simply did not want to "violate their business agreements," don't you see, and in any case "they quickly recognized that in a world crisis the traditional ethics of international business had to give way to the greater ethic of patriotism." Mr. Nelson is obligingly silent both as to the names of the monopolies concerned and as to the nature of their "business agreements." Does he think that the American people have forgotten Standard Oil's scandalous withholding of synthetic rubber patents? Does he imagine that we have forgotten that the "business agreements" were with Nazi cartels such as I. G. Farben? But perhaps we ought to thank Mr. Nelson for reminding us that traffic with and solicitude for the fascist enemy is "the traditional ethics" of our finance capitalists. It is an illuminating slip of the tongue.

Of a piece with Mr. Nelson's "objectivity" is Lester Markel's whitewash of the capitalist press. Was the press anti-Soviet? Well . . . yes, "yet the story of Russia's part in the war was well and fully told," and, besides, Russia is largely to blame for anti-Soviet bias because it doesn't "give the American press more of a chance to do its proper job." Was the capitalist press anti-Roosevelt whereas the people voted for FDR in four elections? Now that you mention it, many papers did fail to "preserve their objectivity and their perspective . . . every fourth November," but then they *did* carry FDR's speeches, "and so Mr. Roosevelt was able to make his case despite the editorial pages." Objective, get it? Incidentally, Mr. Markel doesn't forget to blow the horn for The New York *Times*, of which he is the Sunday editor.

This admission of embarrassing realities merely to explain them away in the next breath is a slick technique which the apologists for monopoly use with great skill. Take the chapter on advertising by Raymond Rubicam, retired head of one of the world's largest advertising organizations. Or take the stylized cynicism of Eric Hodgins, vice-president of Time, Inc., who writes on "The Magazines": ". . . the immediacy of the Apocalypse made the magazine editor seem occasionally like a refugee Prime Minister clogging his own warriors' egress with the limousine he was using to transport his mistress' rescued canary." On closer examination, however, both the sophisticated Mr. Rubicam and the compulsively clever Mr. Hodgins shout, "Hooray for our side!" every bit as loudly and shamelessly as the more pedestrian Mr. Markel.

Yes, we could use a good book, telling us what the score was on the home front "while we were gone," but this, unfortunately, is not the book.

Recreating Primitive Man

INTIMATIONS OF EVE, *by Vardis Fisher. Vanguard. $2.75.*

EVEN in an age which has produced the encyclopedic novels of Proust, Martin Du Gard and Jules Romain, the projected series by Vardis Fisher is

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an ambitious one. Beginning with *Darkness and the Deep* and continuing through *The Golden Rooms* and the present work, Fisher presents a picture of *la condition humaine*, circa the lower level of barbarism. These and the novels yet to come are intended, apparently, as a history of man's spiritual and social development.

The undertaking of such a project is a testimony of the writer's seriousness. Aside from the actual labor of research involved — not a negligible item—there are inherent difficulties connected with writing a novel around characters out of the primitive past. There is in the first place a problem of character: the primitive is after all not just modern man with his pants off. The question of creating or deducing a believable psychology is of first importance in a work of this kind.

Another difficulty is that of plot. In any novel of modern times, the actual historical event assumes considerable conscious significance, and the immediate social environment of the characters transcribes itself in terms of motives and attitudes. In *Intimations of Eve*, the fact that society is just being created, along with a broader consciousness, negates a complicated plot structure. History, too, in the contemporary sense, is absent: it took relatively longer to discover the stone axe than the A-bomb. The dramatization required in a novel forces Fisher to compress historical processes, and to isolate certain events—the discovery of a new tool, for example—in order to use them as background to the creation of character. Such a method is perfectly legitimate and a commonly used one. In dealing with slowly maturing forces and such huge sweeps of time, however, such a method is apt to suggest a series of birds-eye views or Historical Events as Seen from H. G. Wells' Time Machine.

The main focus of *Intimations of Eve*, as the title might or might not suggest, is on the growth of magical or religious rites centering around the Old Woman of the family adumbrating the Matriarchy. Man has evolved from a point where a hostile environment is reflected only as an animal fear. His consciousness has developed, and his curiosity as to causes. Since he has no scientific basis for ascertaining the operation of natural laws, his imagination compounds an animism which explains all events on the basis of ghosts or spirits. Since consciousness is informed by a fear of the environment, these ghosts are malevolent and have to be propitiated.

The novel deals primarily with the antagonism of the Old Woman of the family and the one active male who is also her son. The Old Woman holds her dominant position in the household largely on the basis of her "magic" and her alliance with the Moon Woman — the supreme supernatural force, the forerunner of the gods who have not yet been invented in anything like a modern form. The alliance rests, on the one hand, upon the relationship of the moon to the menstrual cycle and upon the ascribed relationship of the moon to fertility. On the other, the Old Woman's role is that of interpreter and inventor of rites—in other words, she is the first Priestess, although not conscious of herself as such.

Since the Matriarchy is just evolving and does not yet rest on the pillars of sexual taboo and communal property relations, the Old Woman must use her magic to dominate the man, to offset his importance as the hunter for the family. And since the sexual basis of childbirth has not yet been discovered, hunting is considered the sole social purpose for man's existence.

As a reaction to the domination of the women, the man begins the development of his own magic. He begins the elaboration of the idea of individual responsibility, guilt, thereby creating the ideological basis for sin; and he devises fetishes to protect himself. While leading this hectic life of the mind, he finds time to stumble onto the invention of the canoe and to domesticate the goat. In these two acts he sets the stage for a new era of human development.

Obviously there is considerable difficulty in creating character in a novel such as this. Since no one has had acquaintance with our primitive ancestors, it might be presumptuous to criticize the writer on this point. However, it is fair to point out that while the author does describe what would seem logical components of the primitive's psychology, he does not manage to dramatize that psychology: though a novel of this nature must be judged not so much in terms of techniques essential to a novel on a modern theme, but on how well it dramatizes and humanizes material which up to now has been the special property of the anthropologist or the pulp writer. From this point of view, whatever its other shortcomings, the book is certainly a success.

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IN MEMORIAM

The Family of Herman Chester announce the unveiling of a monument to his memory on Sunday, May 12th at 2 P.M., at Mt. Judah Cemetery, Ridgewood, Brooklyn.

Such a work as the one Fisher has begun has got to be judged finally as a whole, not on the basis of its components. This work and the novels preceding it are necessarily deductive, since for the most part even contemporary primitives are at a much higher stage of development than those in the book. The latter are at what Engels, in *Origin of the Family*, called the lower limits of barbarism. As the work progresses, it will be more and more referrable to existing primitive societies and to scientific fact. It is to be hoped that as his characters approach civilization Fisher will concentrate more on creating a picture of society in motion, on indicating the historical processes behind new ideas, institutions and discoveries.

As the other novels in the group appear, it will become apparent whether Fisher has really "created" the world of the past in the special way in which art creates for us even things with which we thought we were familiar; or whether he is consciously or unconsciously making primitive man a scapegoat in order to justify, on the basis of a "scientific" Original Sin, the present unhappy human condition.

THOMAS MCGRATH.

The Phony Pays Off

HONEYFOGLE TIME, *by Virginia Dale. Harper.* $2.50.
BOY ALMIGHTY, *by Feike Feikema. Itaska Press.* $2.75.

"HONEYFOGLE TIME" is set in the Midwest during the 1880's, and strains at authenticity through the incessant repetition of colloquialisms like "honeyfogle" and "donsie." It is also studded with witticisms about newfangled inventions of the devil like tomatoes, sewing machines, bloomers and the telegraph. The story is of young love crossed up by stern parents, and the molasses is ladled in by the quart.

Compared to this concoction, *Boy Almighty* reads like a masterpiece. It isn't quite that, but it is an honest and stirring novel of the struggle against tuberculosis of a young, idealistic and unsuccessful writer. The author has been able to give a convincing account of the mental struggle and growth of his hero, and an understanding picture of the little human world of the sanitarium. The one fault I find is that he shares a little of his hero's adolescence —it seems all his friends are potentially great poets, scientists and philosophers. I am afraid that the greatness as a writer of the central character, Eric Frey, and the originality as a philosopher of his friend, Fawkes, are both open to question. The important quality this book has, however, is its sense of having faced the problems of life in America today with no questions barred.

The fact that so fine a work as *Boy Almighty* is in the pauper class, while *Honeyfogle Time* stands to earn a small fortune, is another of many signs of the dangerous direction being taken by culture in America today. The latter book has already appeared as a magazine serial, is now being pushed by an organized advertising and publicity campaign, and is slated for the movies. The fact is that *Honeyfogle Time* is so consciously cut to the Hollywood charm and genre specifications that one can count and weigh its ingredients, and even guess the actors and directors who will be called upon to give its paper-thin characters a spurious third dimension. It is the kind of censored and standardized article that the monopolists of culture in our country would like to make their stock in trade.

S. FINKELSTEIN.

Mental Buchenwald

THE SNAKE PIT, *by Mary Jane Ward. Random House.* $2.50.

"I SHALL try to remember Juniper Hill for a book," says Virginia Cunningham to herself during her incarceration, "and then they will say what an imagination you have, my dear. Don't you know that modern mental hospitals aren't at all like your trumped-up Juniper Hill?"

But I, having been a patient in a modern mental "hospital," shall say nothing of the sort. Instead, I shall fervently bless Mary Jane Ward for having written *The Snake Pit*, for having turned her considerable talent into this true and terrifying hospital portrait.

In medieval days, when people knew no better, the mentally ill were lowered into a snake pit in the hope that they would be frightened into sanity. Today we know better, but the mental hospital, for all its boasting, is still little more than a gigantic snake pit. The immense advances of psychiatry have been a godsend to patients who can afford private treatment outside an institution; within institutional walls the centuries are rolled back and we are

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once more in the days of the snake pit and the iron manacle, at least in the figurative sense. "If this be shelter," says Virginia, "give me storm away from the hills."

The Snake Pit, we are told, is largely autobiographical. Virginia Cunningham's personal story, her struggle against psychosis, is interesting and well done, but it is not the major theme of the book, whose emphasis is on hospital conditions. Virginia is a girl of considerable resources—once, when she is unusually ill, she manages by a clever trick to see a doctor, and that, as everyone knows who has been there, is an almost incredible feat. Yet even Virginia is unable, for a long time, to struggle successfully against the relapses brought about by the hospital's manifold brutalities. Already underweight when she entered, she is too weak to fight with the others at her table for the spoiled eggs or the pale-brown stew, most often meatless; she gets almost nothing to eat, but the hospital staff never bothers to notice.

There is not only too little food at Juniper Hill; there is too little time to eat it, too few beds, too few mattresses to place on the floor, too few covers for cold nights, too few sheets, too little toilet paper, no handkerchiefs, too few showers, even too little drinking water. There is no laundry service for patients' clothing, which they wear with shame for months without washing. There is almost no opportunity for recreation. There are far too few doctors and nurses.

There are, however, plenty of straitjackets. There are plenty of continuous tubs, in which the patients are kept longer than the law allows by shifting a patient from one tub to the next. There is plenty of medication, and the patients are almost constantly drugged; it isn't good therapy, but it's easier on the staff, and "Juniper Hill's goal was to Keep Them Quiet." At that, "Juniper Hill" — whatever its real name—is reputed to be "one of the best in the country"; it probably is.

There is plenty of occupational therapy, too, if you include under that head the mopping, scrubbing, laundering, cooking, dishwashing, and the servicing of staff-houses—all of which, Virginia observes, "gets work done that they would have to hire out otherwise." And, in case you've got the wrong idea, Virginia's stay at Juniper Hill is not free; although this is a tax-supported institution, her "care" must be privately paid for.

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The Snake Pit is the fourth novel to be published within a year which reveals, at long last, the truth about many of our mental hospitals. Is the Great Whitewash Campaign over at last? The appearance of books like these, and the recent formation of a number of progressive organizations, such as the People's Committee for Mental Hygiene in New York, to fight the intolerable abuses of these American mental Dachaus, lead us to dare to hope so.

SELDEN MURRAY.

Recent Poetry

COME BACK TO EARTH, *by Roy Helton. Harper.* $2.

THE BRIDGE, *Poems 1939-1944, by Ruth Pitter. Macmillan.* $1.50.

THE FEVER IN THE DRUM, *by Harry William Nelson. Caslon Press.* 50¢.

IN PRAISE OF HEROES, *War Poems, by Alexander Karanikas. Clarke Press. (No price.)*

IN *Come Back to Earth* Roy Helton invites us to a little lyrical banquet celebrating the starry nuptials of Housman and Emily Dickinson. It is a pithy singing speech affirming man's need to return "to here and now."

Such lines as "Who wins the nod from violets, needs no prolonged applause" have the precise accent of the Amherst poet, her angled oddity of phrasing. Poems XIII, XIV and others follow suit. Poem IX (and others) are admirable pastiches of Housman's Ludlow Town style. The lineaments of Mr. Helton's "ancestors" are unmistakable.

Here is in theme the old song of man's optimistic gratitude to the earth, and mixed with it, at times, a cloudy realization that until the social relation becomes a cooperative one man will be cheated of its fruits. Mr. Helton desires men's freedom not as an end in itself but as a means to greater individual distinction.

He is least successful in the marriage of idea and poetic emotion where his slogans become explicit rather than implicit in imagery. For example:

Let human progress
Move by easy stages:
First rule yourselves
And then correct the ages.

Since Mr. Helton has chosen to point his moral with such precision an equally precise observation may be made by the critic. As revealed in these poems his program of regeneration would, as an eminent churchman said of his church, "Rescue individual slaves and leave the slave system intact."

The second of the mature poets in this group, Ruth Pitter, an Englishwoman, has easily the greater stature. Here is a more skillful, more varied craftsmanship, richer in metre and sound textures. Here are the deft detail and delicate ear of a fine and refined talent. The theme of *The Bridge* is England in its "finest hour." Miss Pitter writes, as a participant in the heroic popular resistance to the indiscriminate fascist air attacks, of

innocence
Born of pain, and only found
On such long-tormented ground,
There where the unresting seas
Fashion the perfect pearl of peace.

This verse has in common with Helton's a strain of natural mysticism —something akin to the pantheism of Wordsworth. The birds which recur so often may serve in their minuteness and in their beauty as symbols: it is a distinguished but minor poetry.

Seeking personal peace, declaring at last that "every kind of love went bad/ Between me and my kind," she asks to resign her consciousness to the forces of nature. This bias, almost depicting nature as the fulfillment of man rather than the reverse, gives her verse too often the feel of marble casing an imprisoned pulse.

Locally printed verse is not inevitably poor, by any means; but Harry William Nelson's poetic emotion remains inchoate, unreleased in words. "Carnival," for example, from which his book's title *The Fever in the Drum* was taken, is a hodge-podge of rythms and images. It is put together not without rhyme but with the most fortuitous reason, seemingly developed as Mr. Nelson wrote. Such trite archaisms as "ebon lake" and "sit me down" may be drawn from his grab-bag. Yet, undisciplined and raw as the verse is, it reveals a very real fervor.

Alexander Karanikas' *In Praise of Heroes,* also by a young writer, is verbose and frequently mawkish. The more glib the comparison, the more odious, perhaps. Yet, at its best, this book suggests Robert W. Service plus a spark of Vachel Lindsay. Mr. Karanikas, whose sympathies and evident social passion are certainly commendable, is writing too much too uncritically.

RAY SMITH.

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sights and sounds

SAGA OF STALINGRAD

Simonov's great novel, "Days and Nights," is recreated in film with unadorned authenticity.

By JOSEPH FOSTER

THE seventy days and nights during which the worn but indestructible Red troops defended Stalingrad have been made the theme of *Days and Nights* (Stanley Theater), the best Soviet film to show here since *Girl No. 217*.

It is based on the popular novel of the same name, and since the adaptation was made by Konstantine Simonov, its author, the movie follows the original material faithfully. The whole gallery of characters which we have come to identify with the battle at the Volga reappear as old friends: Captain Saburov, Vanin, Colonels Protsenko and Remizov, Mischa Maslennikov, Anya, the blond nurse, Petya and many others.

The film, like the book, deals not only with the military defense of the city but with a defense of personal ideals. Like the book, it presents a living diary of these characters who contributed so much to the contemporary definition of valor. Shot in and around Stalingrad, the film possesses the unadorned realism and authenticity of a documentary.

Yet for all its commendable qualities it does not, within its medium, achieve a level commensurate with the greatness of the theme. This is due to two structural defects. To begin with, the film attempts to reproduce the entire panorama of events covered by the book. A novel can range all over the map and yet tarry for long periods over minutae of character, emotional experience, etc. But a film bent on covering lots of ground cannot stop to fill in detail. It has its temporal limitations. Consequently many of the scenes are, of necessity, sketched in, with more bone than meat, and some of the figures appear only in outline.

Second, despite the wide range of incident, the scenes dealing with the traitor are omitted. This was unfortunate, since the existence of the turncoat could have provided the film with the immediate sense of drama and suspense that it lacks. As it is, the conflict is in the idea of battle, in the character of the Nazi soldier, in the stakes of the struggle. All of this is offstage, so to speak, and unintegrated in the dramatic structure. *Girl 217* and *The Rainbow* are superior because the adversaries, matching wills and intelligences, provide the personal drama within the larger contest.

Yet the anguish and grimness of the defenders is real enough. They have a quality of courage and humanity that no audience will be able to resist. The conditions of living are so strongly set down that you almost share the utter fatigue of men who have not eaten or slept for days. The need for constant vigilance to prevent the trickle of a breakthrough from becoming a torrent of defeat is so persistently stressed that it takes on tangible dimensions. When the distant cannonading of the counter-attacking Red Armies is first heard, the characters listen entranced as no music-lover ever listened to Beethoven. The audience is similarly moved.

The realism of the film is due in a large part to the actors, who behave for all the world like the soldiers who actually fought at Stalingrad: Vladimir Soloviev as Saburov, Dmitri Sagal as Vanin, Yuri Liubimov as Mischa, Lev Swerdlin as Protsenko, Anna Lisyanskaya as the nurse. Konstantine Simonov, who made a few explanatory remarks at the press preview of the film, stated that all he wanted to accomplish was to give a truthful picture of Stalingrad. This the film certainly achieved.

"THE VIRTUOUS ZIZI," a French film made some fifteen years ago, is a hilarious satire ridiculing the morals of the French bourgeoisie. It is at present in the hands of the state censors, who intend to hang onto it on the grounds that the picture is immoral, indecent, etc. As its laughter is ribald, its comments frank, honest and damning, the tenacity of our moral watchdogs is easily understood.

A small city in France is concerned with selecting the annual Queen of the Roses. The problem is complicated by the fact that the successful candidate must have the right to wear white in public. An added fillip is a purse of 500 francs donated by the town's leading bluenose, whose husband has left her for an actress. Thus the potential queen must really be virtuous. The committee of women doing the choosing are pictured with rare satire. As each name is brought up, a shrug of the shoulders, a supercilious expression, a deadly innuendo kills her chances. No woman, naturally, is good enough. As a way out, they finally hit upon a young man, an adenoidal adolescent who blushes when a woman so much as looks at him. For the first time, there is a *king* of virtue.

The male vestal, a pimply-faced, gawking errand boy, is dragged through the town, dressed in white, and crowned with roses in scenes that fix forever the idiocy and sham of the traditional ceremonial. He is addressed by the mayor, given his certificate of virtue, the five hundred francs, and the title of king for a year. Now the town's leading citizens celebrate their recognition of purity with a banquet at which they eat and drink themselves silly. The Rose King is addled by the champagne and the amorous glances of the women. Jealous as they are of the claims of virtue among women, they are awestruck and intrigued at the idea of an untouched man. Embarrassed by the boldness of these respectable women, the boy sneaks off and winds up in a bordello. The cocottes soon rid him of his five hundred francs, and when they discover his diploma, of his innocence. In the morning he, his empty wallet, his coro-

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net of roses, his crumpled certificate are swept out with the debris. The town is in an uproar over his disappearance, and the burghers sourly leave off their own nocturnal caresses to recover their official symbol of virtue. When he does show up, he loudly kisses the Abigail whom he regards as the benefactor for his newer and more satisfactory estate. She falls in a dead faint.

The film does a beautiful job, in one magnificent scene after the other, in exposing the hypocrisy and fake moral tone of the community. Over all is the characteristic wit that the French have evinced in such films as *The Baker's Wife* and *The Carnival in Flanders*. Far from being immoral, it argues against the meaningless cant and true immorality of the petty bourgeoisie. It is as therapeutic, as cleansing as deep laughter. But since it treats sex in an adult way, since it follows men and women into the bedroom, it will have a tough time escaping the clutches of the watch and ward gentry, and after them the self-appointed organizations of decency.

The film was revived in a special showing to the New York press in the hope that its members would express enough sentiment to create public interest in it. This is a real opportunity to fight for an adult film.

On Broadway

MY REVIEW of *Woman Bites Dog* by Sam and Bella Spewak must, unfortunately, be an obituary notice. The critics in their dramacidal treatment of this farce about the great American press showed the peculiar guilty defensiveness toward criticism that has become a recent characteristic of the newspaper folk.

There was a time, in the Thirties, when they could take it. But since the State Department hints, together with the solemn declaration of the Newspaper Publishers Association, about the potential role of our "free" press in certain of our international "obligations," they have become sensitive.

The savagery with which the theater critics attacked the obvious weaknesses in *Woman Bites Dog* was almost hysterically disproportionate. The play did not set itself up to be more than a farce. Had the same amount of laughter been extracted from events in a bedroom instead of a newspaper owner's office; had the idiot been a poet instead of a press lord, I am sure the critics would have been ready to grant it its comic successes.

It is a loss that this amusing farce about the manias of an anti-progressive clan of newspaper owners should not have been permitted to deliver its pointed message. And it is a danger sign that newspaper critics should have hissed it off the stage. Perhaps some were not aware of the pressures behind their scorn. Their best friends should tell them that our American "free" press has subtler conditioners than the open threat or the open bribe.

ISIDOR SCHNEIDER.

Records

A RECENT batch of records gives us an opportunity to see Russian music both in its inception as a national art and in its twentieth century development. The early work is an album of excerpts from Michael Glinka's *Ruslan and Ludmilla*, an opera largely unknown in this country except for its brilliant little overture. Included are a tenor song, a long dramatic soprano arioso, and the "Persian Chorus." All of it is beautiful music freely and imaginatively elaborating upon those haunting folk phrases which the aristocratic ladies of the time sneered at as "coachmen's music." It is performed by artists of the Moscow State Theater. The buoyant direction of S. Samosud is especially admirable. (Disc F 731.)

From the period just preceding World War I comes Prokofieff's "Scythian Suite" and Stravinsky's "Song of the Nightingale." The Prokofieff work is an excursion into primitive melodies and rhythms such as much national music was taking during that period, just as much painting was similarly influenced by primitivism. Today it still stands up as a strong and exciting orchestral work, with both the mastery of color and harmony and the forthright emotional qualities that have always characterized this composer. The able performance is by Desire Defauw and the Chicago Orchestra. (Victor, M 1048.) The Stravinsky tone poem, an adaptation of music from an opera of the same name, shows the composer still influenced by the Oriental idiom of Rimsky-Korsakov. It is charming music, but too long for its thin emotional substance. The excellent performance is by Eugene Goosens and the Cincinnati Orchestra. (Victor, M 1041.)

Prokofieff's Seventh Piano Sonata,

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coming from World War II and the Soviet epoch of Russian music, shows how this composer has grown to become a unique and powerful force among the composers of today. He is especially in the forefront of those who are trying to unite the vast technical resources of the modern idiom with the heroic and positive character of the classic symphony and sonata that accompanied the upsurge of democracy a century and a half ago. Constructed like a Beethoven sonata largely on rhythmic phrases, with more lyrical episodes for contrast, it likewise brings into contemporary piano music much of Beethoven's human feeling and epic line. The performance is by the great virtuoso Vladimir Horowitz, who has done pioneer service in popularizing this and its two companion war piano sonatas. (Victor, M 1042.)

Another Disc album of Soviet recordings, F 753, features the First Symphony by Tikhon Khrennikov. It is a solid work in three short movements, enjoyable in its melodies and effectively scored, without revealing an outstanding and individual personality. Also included in the album are an exciting dance, "Leazhinska," from a Suite by Aram Khachaturian, and a song by Khrennikov for Shakespeare's *Much Ado about Nothing* which follows Shakespear's verse form in a modern and popular musical idiom.

Elie Siegmeister and Alfred Kreymborg have collaborated on a children's musical album, *Funnybone Alley* which is outstanding for its creators' love and respect for children. The poetry is illuminated by Kreymborg's sense of democracy and feeling for the detail of everyday life. The melodious and singable music takes its flavor from Siegmeister's research into folk song. Simple and understandable by anyone, this is a poetic and musical work of real distinction by any standards. (Disc F 606.)

The latest in Pierre Monteux's masterly series of recordings of French music, with the San Francisco Symphony, is Vincent D'Indy's *Ishtar Variations* and prelude to *Fervaal*. (Victor, SP-16.) Like so much of the French music that was written between the giant peaks of Berlioz and Debussy, the craftsmanship and taste are wholly admirable, and the melodies are pleasing, but the novelty lies mainly on the surface, overlaying an academic and unexciting core.

S. F.

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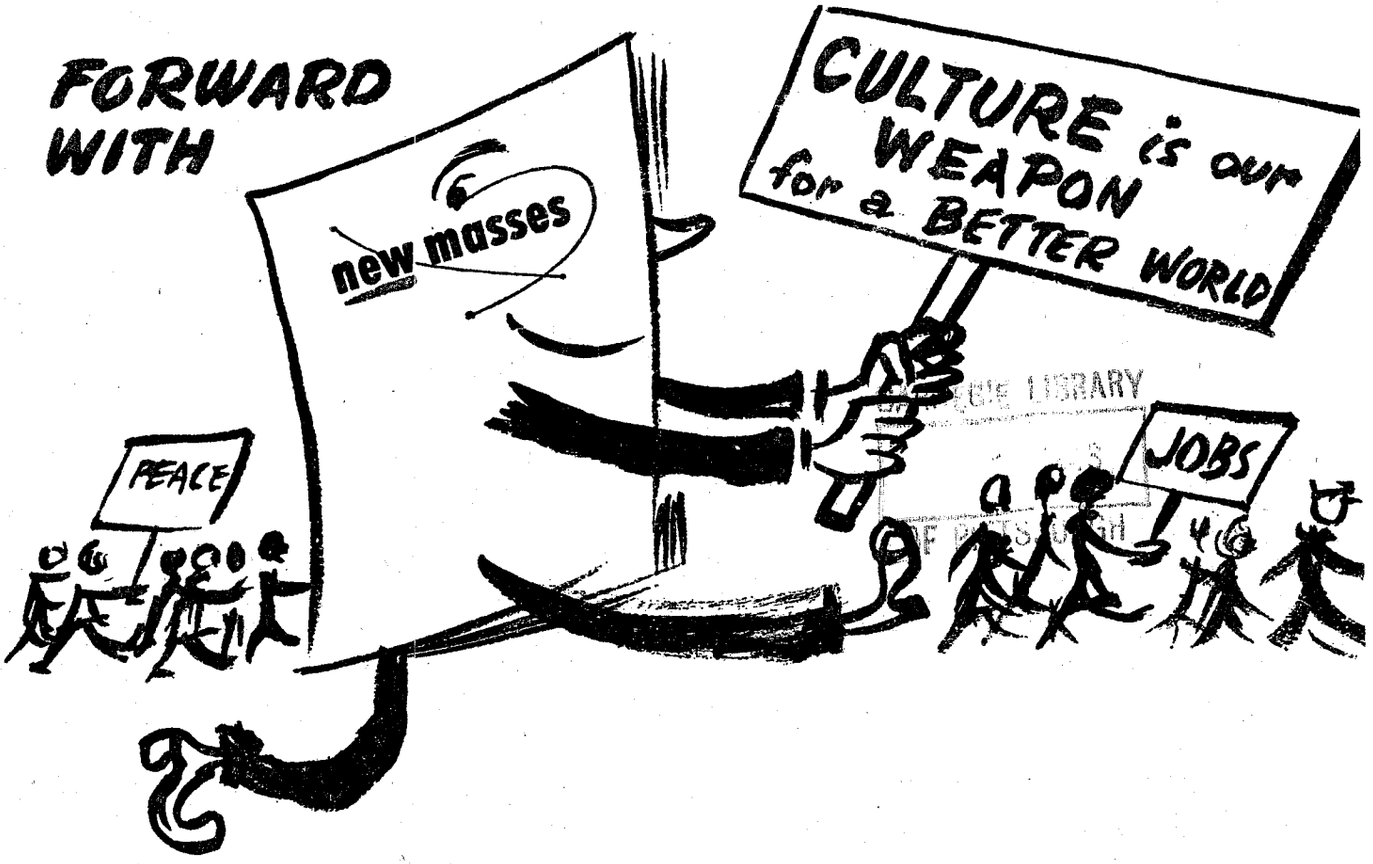

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